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ABSTRACT

This comprehensive publication was created to extend the Denver Museum of Natural History's exhibition "AZTEC: The World of Moctezuma" into the classroom, but can be used independent of the exhibition. Text and activities allow students to explore the Aztec empire, everyday life and work, the art and architecture, and finally, the conquest of the Aztecs. Each chapter includes four to five pages of background information and a set of related activities adapted for three levels: elementary (grades 4-5), intermediate (grades 6-8), and secondary (grades 9-12). The background essays are intended for teacher use, but may be copied and read by secondary students (or by intermediate students who read above grade level). The activities are coded for easy reference: elementary pages are circles, intermediate are squares, and secondary are triangles. This resource book can be used as a complete unit, or can be incorporated into a more personal curriculum. The five instructional chapters are: (1) "The Empire of the Fifth Sun"; (2) "Everyday Life Among the Aztecs"; (3) Working in the Aztec Empire"; (4) "Architecture and Art of the Aztecs"; and (5) "The Fall of the Aztec Empire." Includes 10 teacher resources for further reading. (DQE)

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A Teacher's Guide to AZTEC



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in collaboration with the School Programs Department,
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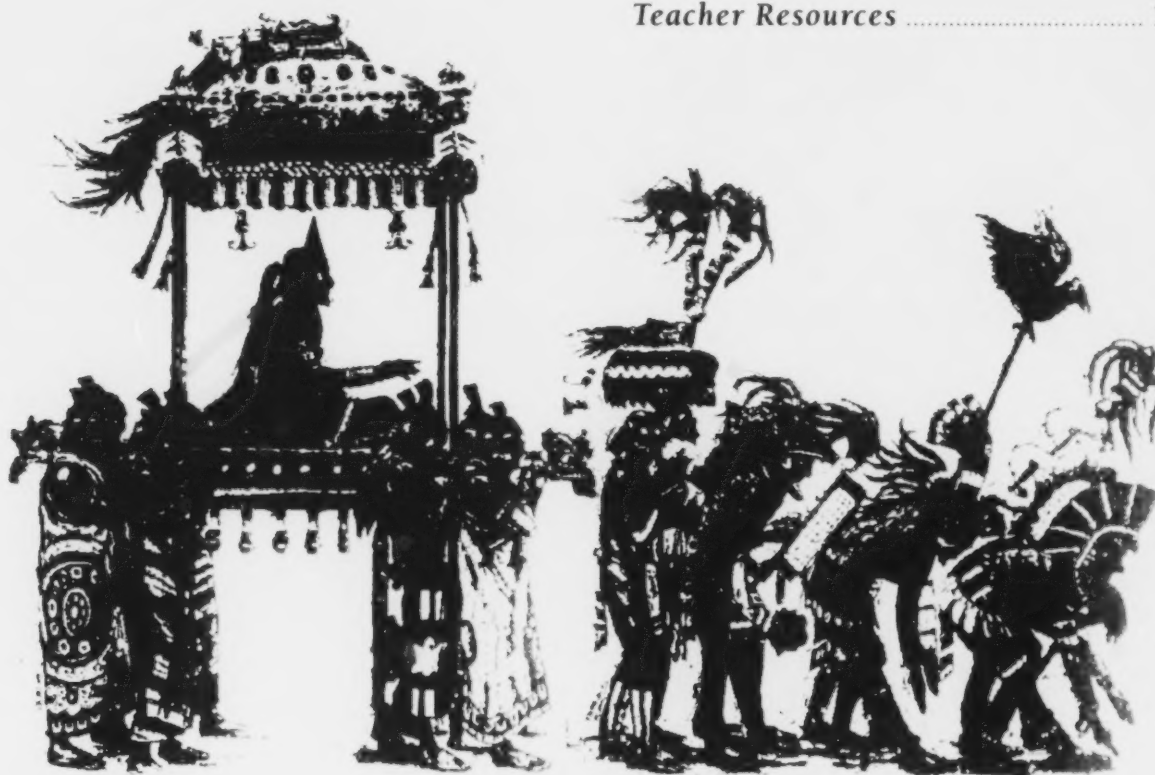
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Building an Empire



The Aztec empire has fascinated the modern world more than many of the other societies that rose and fell in the Americas before the 1492 arrival of Europeans on the continents. In the span of few generations, the Aztecs rose from an obscure, wandering band to a legendary civilization. Then, in the blink of a historic eye, the Aztec empire collapsed.

Who were the Aztecs? Where did they come from? How did they build their empire so quickly? Answers to these questions start our story of the Aztecs.

The Mexica

In the eleventh century, a small group of people who called themselves Mexica (me-SHEE-ka) lived in their homeland they called Aztlan, in the north-central deserts of present-day Mexico. The Mexica and many other groups in the area practiced little or no agriculture. Instead, they lived by hunting small animals and collecting wild plants. Because of the area's dry environment, they often migrated in search of food.

Over a period of several hundred years, many of the migrating bands moved farther south to more hospitable natural environments. The Mexica were among the last groups to leave. Their migration extended from about A.D. 1111 to 1325, when they finally reached the central Valley of Mexico. Along the way the Mexica encountered people from whom they learned to cultivate corn, chiles, and several other crops.

According to legend, the Mexica were led throughout their migration by their patron god Huitzilopochtli (Wee-tsee-lo-POCH-tee). Through priests, Huitzilopochtli instructed the Mexica to separate from the other groups and call themselves

Aztecs. He also told them to search for a sign that would show them where to settle. As they journeyed, the Aztecs built temples and made sacrifices to their god.

Arrival in the Valley of Mexico

After almost 200 years of wandering, the Aztecs arrived in the Valley of Mexico. The 2,700-square-mile (7,200-sq-km) Valley sat at an elevation of 7,000 feet (2,100 m) and was almost completely surrounded by volcanic peaks reaching elevations of over 17,000 feet (5,152 m). At the time of the Aztecs' arrival in the Valley of Mexico, five interlocking lakes, filled from mountain runoff and natural springs, covered the Valley floor. The lakes were advantageous—until they flooded.

Even with the flood hazard, the warm, semi-arid climate of the area must have seemed ideal to the wandering Aztecs. The Aztecs, however, quickly learned that the Valley was already heavily populated by earlier settlers. These groups, some descendants of people who had come to the Valley hundreds of years earlier, did not welcome the newcomers. With established agricultural systems, cities, and alliances among themselves, the inhabitants offered no home to the Aztecs.

According to legend, on one especially bleak day, the Aztecs were chased off the mainland into Lake Texcoco, one of the Valley's five lakes. There they took refuge on an island where they saw an eagle perched on a cactus, the sign promised them by Huitzilopochtli. The Aztecs named the site Tenochtitlan (Te-noch-TEET-lan), which means "place of the prickly pear cactus fruit," and declared the island their permanent home. The year was 1325.

Establishing a Permanent Home

With Tenochtitlan as their home base, the Aztecs began building their empire. To survive among the powerful groups surrounding them, they offered their services to their neighbors. Recognized as fierce and clever warriors, Aztec soldiers were welcomed as mercenaries by the city-state of Azcapotzalco (As-ka-pot-SAL-ko), one of the powerful lakeside communities. Success in military adventures gave the Aztecs standing among the other Valley residents. The Aztecs further cemented their relationships through military alliances and marriages among the families of rulers.

As the Aztecs militarily secured their island capital, they also began constructing permanent buildings. Their first project was to build a temple to honor Huitzilopochtli. Although at first a small, simple altar, the temple was expanded over two centuries until it became a grand edifice. In addition to buildings, the Aztecs built causeways to connect their island with the mainland. Later a dike was built across Lake Texcoco to prevent flooding. The architectural achievements of the Aztecs were accomplished without the use of the wheel, draft animals, or metal tools.

When their population outgrew the island's living space and food sources, the Aztecs copied their neighbors' method of building *chinampas* (chee-NAM-paz), small plots of land. The Aztecs built the chinampas by piling up layers of vegetation and mud in shallow parts of the lakes. They developed a highly fertile agricultural system of reclaimed land and irrigation canals.

As the Aztecs became both militarily and agriculturally successful, they built a magnificent

capital city. Near the first temple in central Tenochtitlan, they built a ceremonial district surrounded by a wall. Outside the ceremonial center, the city was divided into four sections, each section with its own plaza, temples, palaces, schools, ball courts, other public buildings, and homes. North of the central city was the community of Tlatelolco (Tla-te-LOL-ko), which was home to the empire's largest market.

Building the Aztec Empire

For their first one hundred years in the Valley of Mexico, the Aztecs were vassals of Azcapotzalco, providing military assistance and paying taxes to them. In 1426, the Aztecs joined forces with two other groups and formed the Triple Alliance. In 1428, the Alliance defeated Azcapotzalco. Buoyed by their success, the Triple Alliance conquered other neighbors in the Valley, and then extended their military efforts far beyond. The Alliance was generally, but not always, successful. When the Alliance conquered an enemy, it required those defeated to pay tribute in the form of specific goods such as cloth, foods, and precious metals.

In time, the Triple Alliance was dominated by the Aztecs. For more than ninety years after the defeat of Azcapotzalco, the Aztec empire continued to conquer and tax people living in and beyond the Valley of Mexico. By the time the Spanish arrived in 1519, the Aztec empire extended from coast to coast and south to present-day Guatemala, and included approximately 20 million people. Its economy was fueled by tribute from conquered neighbors. Its marketplaces were loaded with both practical and exotic goods. As their empire grew, the Aztecs incorpo-

rated the customs, religions, and even the history of earlier civilizations into their own culture.

At the heart of the Aztec empire was the magnificent city of Tenochtitlan. Upon seeing the crown jewel of the Aztec empire, even the well-traveled Spanish soldiers declared the city so beautiful that they wondered if they were dreaming. Ruling over all the empire from his palace in Tenochtitlan was Moctezuma II.

Knowing About the Aztecs

For all their military, agricultural, and artistic skills, the Aztecs did not have a complete written language. To learn about this impressive civilization, scholars have turned to sources other than written native histories.

AZTEC CODICES

Although the Aztecs did not have an alphabetic written language, they did create books in picture writing. Aztec scribes painted on paper made from bark, cloth, or animal skin to record their history, poetry, calendars, religious beliefs, population counts, taxes, and descriptions of everyday life. Many of the original Aztec codices were destroyed by the early Spanish conquerors. Some, however, were rewritten under the direction of Spanish friars shortly after the conquest.

WRITINGS BY SPANISH CONQUERORS AND FRIARS

Some of the early Spanish arrivals to Mexico were intrigued by the Aztecs and sought to record their impressions in writing. The best-known soldier-author was Bernal Díaz del Castillo, whose chronicles record much of the history of the battles between the Aztecs and the Spanish conquistadores led by Hernán Cortés. Catholic friars such as

Bernardino de Sahagún and Diego Durán spent years with Aztec elders learning the Aztecs' Nahuatl (NA-watl) language and customs. Although these writers were thorough, they did not bring total objectivity to their work.

ARCHAEOLOGICAL ARTIFACTS

Soon after the conquest of the Aztecs, the Spanish tore down or built over Aztec buildings, homes, and agricultural lands. Entombed beneath the Spanish structures were objects made or used by the Aztecs. Over the years, many such artifacts have been unearthed and analyzed. Objects such as pottery, sculpture, building materials, and tools help us better understand Aztec life.

TRADITIONS OF PRESENT-DAY AZTEC DESCENDANTS

Although the original Aztec population was nearly destroyed by the Spanish invasion during the early 1500s, today approximately one million people in Mexico retain some Aztec customs and language. By studying some of these descendants' practices such as weaving, anthropologists learn more about the Aztecs.

The Empire of the Fifth Sun



Over their years of wandering and empire building, the Aztecs developed a very orderly society. Rules of behavior guided both their public and private activities. Moderation and caution were expected of all Aztecs. Severe consequences befell those who strayed too far from an exemplary life.

Social Classes

Aztec social regulations defined two social classes—nobles and commoners. The nobility included rulers, chiefs, and nobles. Rulers ruled over empires, cities, or major towns. Chiefs controlled smaller geographic or political areas than rulers and usually held high military positions. Nobles were land owners and held government, religious, and military positions. In general, members of the nobility were born into their class.

Commoners, the *macehualtin* (ma-se-WAL-teen), were the backbone of the Aztec empire. As farmers, fishermen, and craftsmen, they produced the food and goods needed to keep the empire functioning. Commoners were required to pay nobles tribute in the form of labor, food, clothing, firewood, and other necessary goods. Tribute had to be paid on demand. Commoners could personally use or trade any food or goods that remained after their tribute had been paid. About the only way a commoner could advance to the noble class was through outstanding military service.

Below the two social classes were the slaves. Any Aztec could become a slave as punishment for committing crimes such as theft, failing to pay taxes or a gambling debt, or by slipping into extreme poverty. Aztecs experiencing hard times often sold themselves or their children into slav-

ery. Aztec slaves owed their labor to another person, but were not themselves owned by the person they served. For their services, slaves were provided food and shelter. Some captives taken by Aztec warriors during battle or acquired by long-distance traders were forced into slavery. These slaves were owned by their masters and could be bought and sold at marketplaces.

Government Organization

The Aztec empire was ruled by the nobility. The supreme ruler, the emperor, lived in the sacred center of Tenochtitlan. He was responsible for making major military decisions, defending the empire, settling difficult legal disputes, and participating in important religious ceremonies. Moctezuma Xocoyotzin (Mok-te-ZU-ma Sho-ko-YO-tsin), also known as Moctezuma II, was the supreme ruler of the Aztecs. Throughout the empire, rulers and chiefs served similar functions in their smaller city-states and towns.

Perhaps the most distinguishing characteristic of the Aztec empire was its economy. The economy was based on the tribute paid by commoners in Tenochtitlan and by the other groups whom the Aztecs conquered in military battles. The food and goods collected as tribute were distributed among the noble class. In return, the nobility performed government functions. The tribute demands were enforced by tax collectors who lived or traveled throughout the empire. If necessary, military force was used by the Aztecs to collect tribute.

Warfare

When the first small band of Aztecs entered the Valley of Mexico, they established themselves

as fierce and skillful warriors. Over the years, the Aztecs built their empire by using their military skills to conquer neighboring groups. With an economy dependent largely on tribute, the Aztecs needed to constantly expand their boundaries to bring in more goods. Through military conquest, the Aztecs also acquired captives to use as human sacrifices in religious ceremonies.

All able Aztec men—nobles and commoners alike—were required to serve as warriors on demand. Although the Aztec rulers did not maintain a large standing army, they did require men to train for military service so they would be ready to serve if called upon.

Once Aztec warriors had conquered a neighboring group of people, Aztec rulers generally did not take complete control. Instead, they left the people's own rulers in place and allowed the conquered people to continue their way of life—as long as they paid tribute. This practice gave the Aztecs an economically based empire, but not a unified nation.

Religion

Aztecs were guided by their religious beliefs in both their public and private lives. The importance of religion to the Aztecs was visible in the massive pyramids and temples that dotted the landscape of Tenochtitlan. Priests and priestesses constantly attended these temples, carrying out elaborate rituals to honor the gods to whom the temples were dedicated.

Underlying Aztec religious beliefs was the Legend of the Suns, the explanation of the origin of the universe. According to legend, the universe had been created and destroyed during four previous suns.

The Aztecs, who lived in the period of the Fifth Sun, believed that their "sun" also would come to an end. The Aztecs considered it their responsibility to sustain the sun and keep it moving across the sky.

The Aztec worshiped many gods. Some they adopted from earlier cultures, including Teotihuacan (Te-o-tee-WA-kan) and the Toltecs (Tol-TEKS), whom they admired. They adopted other gods from conquered neighbors. While forcing the worship of Huitzilopochtli on the people they conquered, the Aztecs also adopted the conquered people's gods as their own.

Aztec gods were associated with three main religious themes: creation, fertility, and warfare. Although there were several gods for each of these themes, some gods were more important than others. Those listed below were among the most honored.

CREATION

- *Tezcatlipoca* (Tes-kat-lee-PO-ka)—
God of Gods
- *Quetzalcoatl* (Ket-tsal-KO-atl)—
The Plumed Serpent, creator of humans
of the Fifth Sun

FERTILITY

- *Tlaloc* (TLA-lok)—God of Rain
- *Xiuhtecuhtli* (She-oo-te-KOO-tee)—
The Old God of Fire
- *Quetzalcoatl* (ket-tsal-KO-atl)—
Giver of Maize to Humans

WARFARE

- *Huitzilopochtli* (Wee-tsee-lo-POCH-tee)—
God of War and the Sun

Also important to the everyday life of Aztecs were gods who served as patrons of craft workers.

For example, Xipe Totec (SHEE-pe TO-tek), God of Early Spring, was considered the patron god of the goldworkers.

Religious Ceremonies

All Aztecs participated throughout the year in many ceremonies honoring their gods. Led by priests and highly trained musicians and dancers, many ceremonies included feasting, dancing, games, and sometimes bloodletting and mock battles.

Deeply embedded in Aztec religious ritual was the practice of human sacrifice. Although many ancient myths provided the basis for this practice, one story of Huitzilopochtli, the God of War and the Sun, was particularly influential. The myth described Huitzilopochtli as the sun who fought with the moon and stars for control of the heavens—a fight Huitzilopochtli won, but which he had to fight again and again. The Aztecs believed that for each new day to dawn, they had to help Huitzilopochtli in his battle with the moon and stars by providing him with the continual nourishment of human blood.

Human sacrifice was always carried out by priests in a ritualistic manner. Most victims were men captured in military conquests, but occasionally women and children were sacrificed. Sacrifices generally were performed by removing the heart of the victim and offering it to the gods.

The Aztecs' general world view was fatalistic—their fate was predetermined by gods before the origin of their civilization. However, they also believed that they could influence fate to some extent. Many of their religious practices, including human sacrifice, were an attempt to exercise such influence over their destiny.

Recording Time and Calendars

Aztecs were greatly concerned with the passage of time. To keep track of time they used two interrelated calendars. One was a solar calendar which was tied to the agricultural cycle. The solar calendar consisted of 365 days, divided into 18 months of 20 days each. The remaining five days, called the "hollow" or "nameless" days, were tacked onto the end of a year and were considered very unlucky.

The other Aztec calendar was a ritual calendar, the *tonalpohualli* (to-nal-po-WHA-lee), which means "count of days." Reflecting the Aztec belief that time passes in cycles rather than in a linear sequence, the *tonalpohualli* consisted of two wheels, or rounds. One round had 13 numbered positions. The other had 20 positions, each with a named sign, such as rabbit, house, or alligator. The interlocking of these two rounds produced a number-name for each day, such as 1 Rabbit or 10 House. The number-name of each day was considered an omen of good, bad, or indifferent outcomes for individuals.

When combined, the solar and ritual calendars produced a 52-year cycle of 18,980 unique days. At the end of a 52-year cycle, Aztecs celebrated a special ritual, the New Fire Ceremony, which was considered the "binding of the years."

Codices

The Aztecs were prompted by both their system of government and their pride in their empire's history and culture to keep official records. The task of record-keeping was the responsibility of scribes—well-educated men with artistic abilities. Scribes kept records in books called codices. A codex was

made from a long strip of bark paper, cloth, or animal skin that was folded, like an accordion, into "pages."

The record-keeping task of scribes was particularly challenging because the Aztecs did not have an alphabet-based written language. Although their spoken language, Nahuatl (NA-watl), was structurally sophisticated and rich in vocabulary, it had not been systematized into written form. The codices produced by the scribes were "written" in a hieroglyphic style that combined realistic pictures with picture symbols, or glyphs.

In their codices, scribes generally did not record every detail of an event or practice. Instead, they recorded only major features and expected people to interpret the codices orally and fill in the details. The codices, then, can be considered memory devices that recorded basic, but not comprehensive, information about the Aztec culture. The details of the civilization were remembered through a strong oral tradition that was passed from generation to generation.

Upon encountering the Aztec codices, the early Spanish conquerors determined them to be the works of infidels. They destroyed many of the originals. Fortunately, some of the friars traveling with the soldiers recognized the importance of the codices as a record of Aztec civilization. They gathered together Aztec scribes to recreate some of the more important codices. On these rewritten books, the Spanish recorded notes, either in Spanish or in phonetically-translated Nahuatl. Today fewer than two dozen Aztec codices, mostly recreated versions, exist in the world. Many codices are housed in European museums and libraries.

INTERPRETING AZTEC CODICES: *Education in the Aztec Culture*

Lesson Objective

To introduce students to the format and picture-writing style used by Aztecs to record important cultural information, such as the education of children, in books called codices.

Materials Needed

- Elementary Reading, "Aztec Folding Books," 1 copy per student
- Elementary Worksheet, "Reading Aztec Picture Writing," 1 copy per student
- Blank paper, 4 sheets per pair of students; brown construction paper, 2 sheets per pair of students; tape; pencils, crayons or color markers

Teaching Strategy

SHARING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Verbally share with students background information from "The Empire of the Fifth Sun." In a discussion, have students compare cultural characteristics of the Aztecs with aspects of our culture or other cultures that the students may have studied. Emphasize comparisons among government organizations, economies, military service, crafts, religious practices, celebrations, perceptions of time, and forms of communication. To aid in drawing comparisons, you may find it helpful to construct a chart on the chalkboard with categories such as those listed in the previous sentence. Before continuing with the lesson, give particular attention to the section entitled "Codices."

INTRODUCING THE AZTEC FOLDING BOOK

Distribute to students copies of the reading page, "Aztec Folding Books." Call on volunteers to read paragraphs aloud. Lead students in dis-

cussing the illustration of a codex at the bottom of the page and in comparing the format of a folding book with that of a bound book. Continue by emphasizing that a systematic alphabet is required for the development of a true written language.

INTERPRETING AZTEC PICTURE WRITING

After distributing copies of the worksheet, "Reading Aztec Picture Writing," review with the students the directions at the top. Tell the students to study the pictures before writing their descriptions on the lines below.

When students are finished, encourage them to share their interpretations of the illustrations. After student sharing, provide the following scholarly interpretations.

1. Father tells 13-year-old son how to do the adult work of carrying goods on foot and by canoe.
2. Mother tells her 13-year-old daughter how to cook.
3. Father teaches 14-year-old son how to fish.
4. Mother teaches 14-year-old girl how to weave.

Concluding Project

Explain to students that they will have the opportunity to describe their own education by making an Aztec-style codex. Divide students into pairs. Give each pair four sheets of blank paper. Direct each student to think of two skills they are learning, either at home or in school. Have them illustrate each skill on a separate sheet of paper, in Aztec picture-writing style. Remind them to include a teacher, parent, or other adult in each of their drawings.

As pairs finish their drawings, show them how to tape together their four sheets into a long, horizontal strip. Then demonstrate how to fold their sheets, accordion style, into a book.

Provide each pair of students two sheets of brown construction paper and direct them to tape one sheet to each end of their folded book. The brown sheets represent the wooden covers used by the Aztecs to protect their codices. Tell students that Aztec scribes often decorated their covers with paintings or flat pieces of turquoise. Encourage students to decorate their codex covers.

Conclude by allowing time for students to compare the skills they illustrated in their codices.

Aztec Folding Books

The Aztecs spoke a language called Nahuatl (NA-watl). They created beautiful songs, poems, and speeches. Nahuatl was only a spoken language. The Aztecs did not have an alphabet to write down their language.

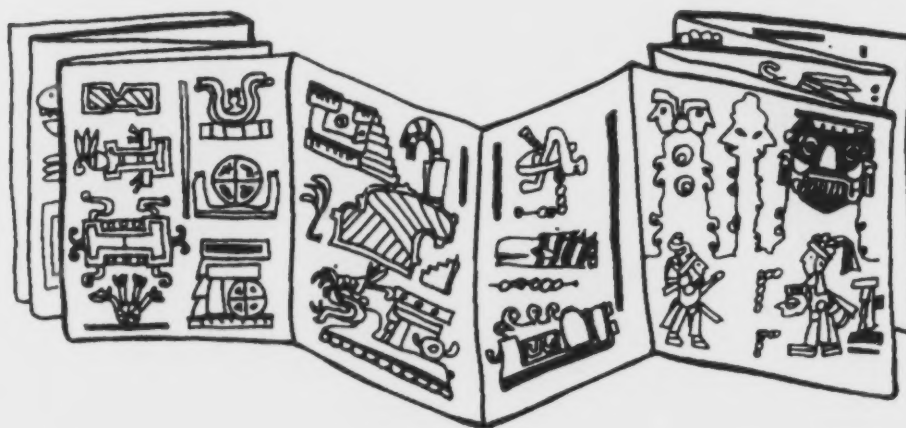
Aztec books were filled with pictures instead of words. An Aztec picture book is called a *codex*. Several picture books are called *codices*. Each codex has a name, such as the *Codex Mendoza*.

Aztec books were created by *scribes*. Scribes were well-educated men with artistic talent. Scribes painted pictures on long strips of paper made from tree bark, cloth, or deer skin. The paper was then folded back and forth in a zigzag manner. The scribes attached thin pieces of wood at the ends of the strip. The wood formed covers that protected the pages.

Scribes drew pictures in a form of picture writing. Many pictures were drawn to look like real objects. Other pictures were symbols that stood for ideas. For example, a trail of footprints meant movement from place to place. Pictures were colorfully painted with vegetable dyes.

Most pages in codices were read from top to bottom. Some were read around the page. The whole codex was read from left to right.

In codices, scribes recorded Aztec history, calendars, religion, population, and taxes. Some codices also told about the daily life, including how the Aztecs dressed, cooked, and educated their children.

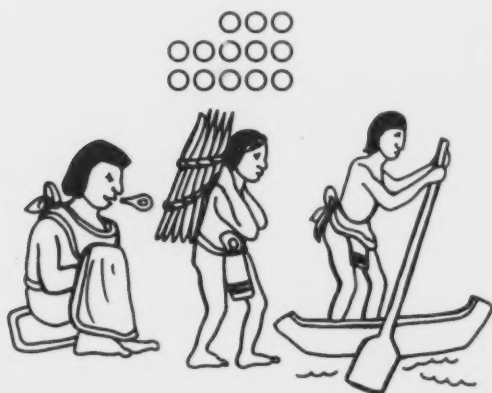


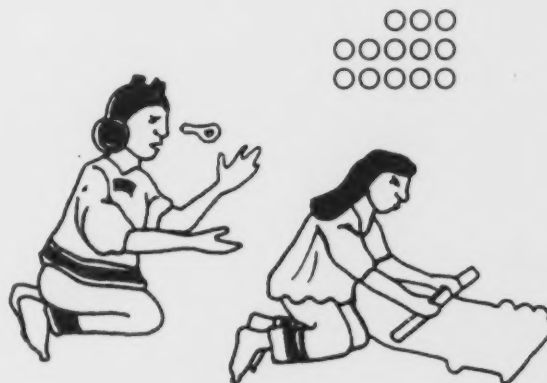
An Aztec codex.

Reading Aztec Picture Writing

The pictures below are redrawn from an Aztec book called the *Codex Mendoza*. The pictures on the left show how boys were educated. Those on the right show the education of girls. The seated figures represent fathers and mothers.

On the line below each picture, describe what you think the parent is teaching the child.









INTERPRETING AN AZTEC CALENDAR: *The Aztec Perception of Time*

Lesson Objective

To introduce students to the Aztec perception of cyclical time as demonstrated in the Aztec ritual calendar.

Materials Needed

- Intermediate Reading, "Recording Time—The Aztec Way," 1 copy per student
- Intermediate Worksheet, "Reading an Aztec Calendar," 1 copy per student
- Drawing paper, 1 sheet per student; color markers or pencils
- Optional: "The Empire of the Fifth Sun," 1 copy per student

Teaching Strategy

SHARING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Verbally share with students background information from "The Empire of the Fifth Sun," or allow time for students to read their own copies of the pages. Compare the cultural characteristics of the Aztec civilization with aspects of our culture or other cultures with which students are familiar. Emphasize comparisons of the cultures' government organizations, economies, crafts, military service, religious practices, celebrations, perceptions and recording of time, and forms of communication. To aid in drawing comparisons, you may find it helpful to construct a chart on the chalkboard with categories such as those listed in the previous sentence. Before continuing with the lesson, give particular attention to the section entitled "Recording Time and Calendars."

INTRODUCING THE AZTEC RITUAL CALENDAR

Explain to students that the Aztecs kept track of time with two calendars. One was a solar calendar that marked days by the rotation of the sun and guided planting and harvesting. The other calendar was a sacred, or ritual, calendar called a *tonalpohualli* (to-nal-po-WHA-lee). It is the ritual calendar that they will learn about in this lesson.

Distribute copies of the reading page "Recording Time—The Aztec Way." Call on various students to read the paragraphs, stopping for discussion after each paragraph. Clarify with students the difference between the Aztecs' view of cyclical time and our own perception of linear time. Point out that neither perception is right or wrong, but that the perceptions are different ways of thinking about time.

USING AN AZTEC CALENDAR

After distributing copies of the worksheet "Reading an Aztec Calendar," review the directions with students. Clarify that after students have cut out the two calendar rounds, they are to experiment with rotating the wheels to become familiar with the Aztec number-name designations for days. Have them save the bottom portion of the page.

After a period of experimentation, ask students to compare the Aztec cyclical calendar with our linear calendar. Point out that although our months and days repeat at the end of a year, we assign a new year number to the next year; for example, 1992 becomes 1993. The Aztecs did not distinguish between cycles in such a way.

Concluding Project

Call students' attention to the row of four pictures they cut from the bottom of their activity worksheets. Explain that sometimes Aztecs showed the time at which an event happened by creating a small picture that included the date's number (represented by circles) and its sign. In interpreting the pictures, the number was given first, then the name of the sign. For example, the first picture would be read as 2 House. On the lines beneath the pictures, have students name the four pictures (*2 House, 3 Rabbit, 4 Reed, 5 Flint Knife*).

Distribute one sheet of drawing paper and color markers or pencils to each student. Instruct them to draw one number-name picture in the style of the ones on their worksheet. When they are finished, have them exchange their drawings with classmates to see if their classmates can accurately name their drawings.

Recording Time—The Aztec Way

What is your birthday? Maybe it's June 2 or January 28. To show someone your birthday on a calendar, you would locate both the month and day.

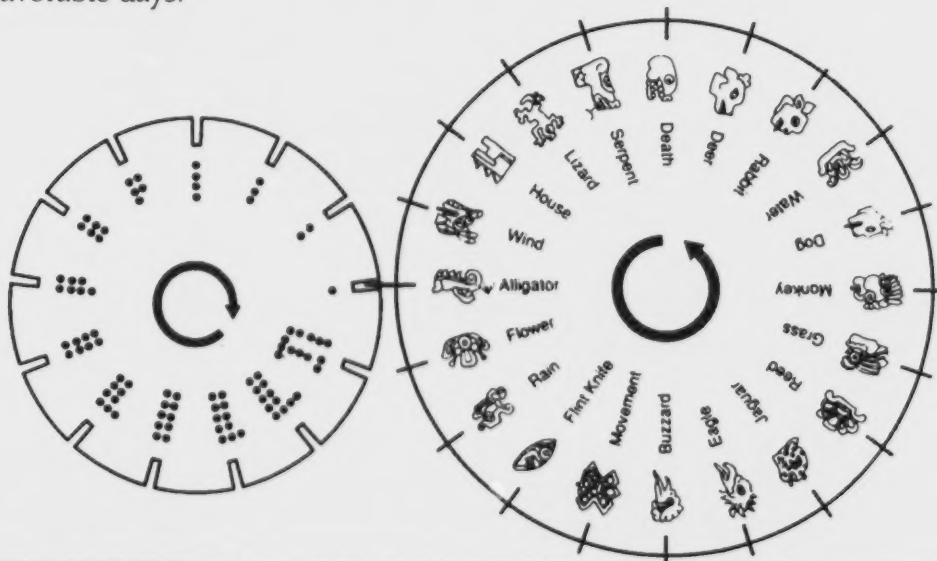
If you were an Aztec, your birthday might be 2 Alligator or 10 House. Instead of identifying your birthday on a month/day calendar, you would use a calendar made of two wheels, or "rounds," like the ones shown below.

The Aztecs' two-round calendar was their ritual calendar. Its name was *tonalpohualli* (to-nal-po-WHA-lee), which means "count of days." To understand how the tonalpohualli worked, look first at the round on the left below. Notice that it has 13 numbered positions around the outside. The round dots equal numbers. Now look at the round at the right. It has 20 positions, each with a sign or symbol. Read the names of the signs.

Aztecs designated each day with a number from the left round and a name from the right round. The first day in an Aztec calendar cycle was 1 Alligator. The second day was 2 Wind.

Aztecs used this kind of calendar to keep track of time because they believed time occurred in repeating cycles. By rotating their two calendar rounds, the Aztecs could name 260 days without repeating a number-name combination. At the end of 260 days, their cycle of days started over.

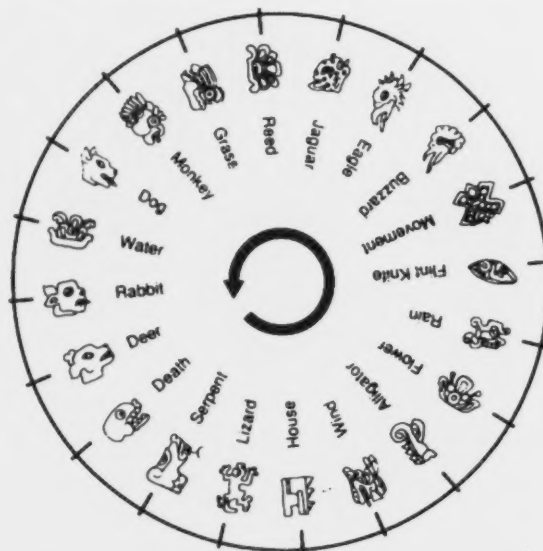
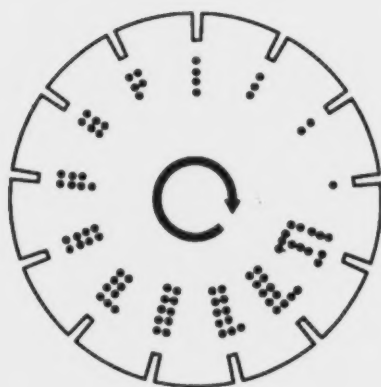
In the Aztec culture, certain days were considered more favorable than others. Aztecs felt their fate was greatly influenced by the day of their birth. To try to improve their fortunes, they planned important events, such as weddings on favorable days.



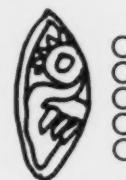
Reading an Aztec Calendar

Cut out the two calendar rounds below. Practice counting days the Aztec way by following these directions.

1. Lay the two rounds on a flat surface. Match position 1, the single circle, on the number round with the alligator on the sign round. The name of this day is 1 Alligator.
2. Turn the number round toward the right to the second, two circle position. Turn the sign round toward the left to the wind sign. Match it with the number sign. What is the number-name of this day?
3. Continue turning the wheels and naming the days until you have used all the sign names.



In their books, Aztecs sometimes showed when events happened by drawing number-name pictures like these. Count the circles and look for the symbols on the sign round. On the blanks below, write the names of the days.



INTERPRETING AZTEC CODICES: *Aztec Marriage Customs*

Lesson Objective

To introduce students to some basic principles of Aztec codex interpretation as they examine a codex record of Aztec marriage customs.

Materials Needed

- Secondary Reading pages 1 and 2, "Aztec Codices: Written Cultural Records," 1 copy per student
- Secondary Worksheet, "Interpreting an Aztec Codex," 1 copy per student
- Sheets of poster paper, 1 per student; color marking pens
- Optional: "The Empire of the Fifth Sun," 1 copy per student

Teaching Strategy

SHARING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Verbally share background information from "The Empire of the Fifth Sun," or allow time for students to read their own copies. Compare the cultural characteristics of the Aztec civilization with aspects of our culture or other cultures with which students are familiar. Emphasize comparisons of the cultures' government organizations, economies, crafts, military service, religious practices, celebrations, perceptions of time, and forms of communication. To aid in drawing comparisons, you may find it helpful to construct a chart on the chalkboard with categories such as those listed in the previous sentence. Before continuing with the lesson, give particular attention to the section entitled "Codices."

INTRODUCING AN AZTEC CODEX

Distribute to students copies of the reading pages "Aztec Codices: Written Cultural Records" and allow time for students to read the information. Discuss the significance of written records and the hieroglyphic style used by the Aztecs.

INTERPRETING A PAGE FROM THE CODEX MENDOZA

After distributing copies of the worksheet "Interpreting an Aztec Codex," have students read the directions and answer any questions. Encourage them to use the interpretation guidelines from the reading page in their examination. Allow time for students to interpret the codex scene, then discuss their interpretations. Compare their perceptions with the following scholarly interpretations.

- At the bottom of the page is the wedding procession.
- The bride is carried on the back of a "matchmaker," an older woman who acted as an intermediary between the families of the bride and groom. The bride is being carried to the home of her new husband. Unmarried relatives or friends of the bride carry torches of pine wood (weddings were held at night).
- Figures of the two men and two women in the upper part of the scene represent elders who are witnesses to the ceremony and who give advice to the pair.
- Food for the marriage banquet is shown in the middle. Food was served by the witnesses.

- The bride and groom are shown sitting on a mat at the top of the scene. Their marriage is symbolized by the tying together of their garments, the girl's blouse and the boy's cape.

In a discussion, have students compare the wedding ceremony of the Aztecs with various marriage traditions common in our culture, such as having attendants for the bride and groom, the exchange of wedding rings, and the inclusion of food in the celebration. Have students point out differences in the wedding traditions followed by people of different religions living in the United States.

Concluding Project

Challenge students to depict a modern-day American wedding ceremony in the style of an Aztec codex. Encourage students from different religious traditions to incorporate particular features of their traditions in their picture writing.

When their drawings are complete, allow time for students to share their pictures. Note the likenesses and differences among various American marriage ceremonies and between Aztec and present-day American wedding traditions.

Aztec Codices: Written Cultural Records

The language of the Aztecs was Nahuatl (NA-watl). It was a language with a rich vocabulary of descriptive words. Nahuatl speakers used their language to compose beautiful songs, poems, and speeches that were publicly recited. Despite the sophistication of their language, the Aztecs did not develop an alphabet for writing it.

Although the Aztecs did not have a written language, they did produce books. An Aztec book, called a *codex* (plural—*codices*), was made of a long strip of bark paper, cloth, or deer skin that was folded, accordion style, into a book. Each codex has a name, such as the *Codex Mendoza*.

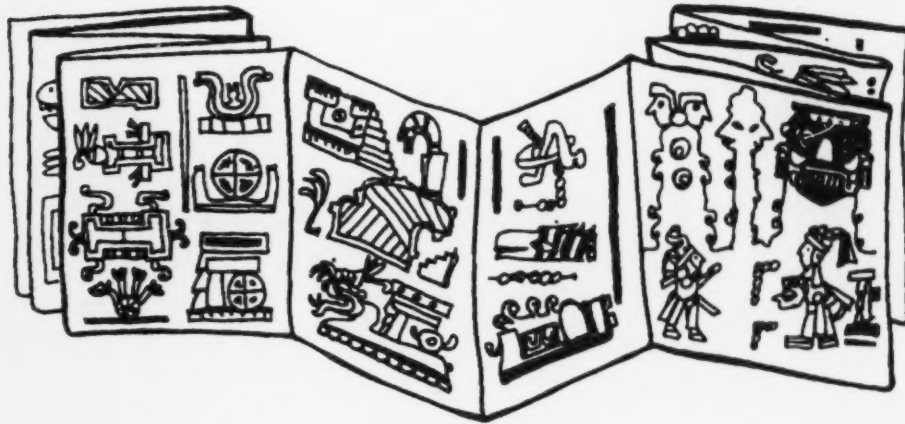
The Aztec scribes who created the codices recorded important information in glyphs, or picture symbols. They did not use written words. Some pictures were pictographs, symbols in which objects, such as a snake, were represented by a miniature, often stylized, drawing. For more abstract ideas, Aztec scribes used ideograms, symbols in which the objects pictured represented not only themselves but also underlying concepts. For example, the idea of motion or sequence was often represented by a trail of footprints.

Aztec glyphs were not placed in sequence like letters and words in one of our books. Instead, the pictures were arranged within a larger composition that often looked like a scene in a painting. As a result, Aztec manuscripts are not read, but instead deciphered, like a puzzle picture. Glyphs provide labels and clues to the meaning.

Every codex scene has certain unique features, but some general rules can be applied in interpreting codices.

- The lower part of the picture generally represents the ground and the upper part the sky.
- Distance is indicated by the placement of figures in the scene. Figures meant to be farthest away are at the top of the scene. Those meant to be nearest are at the bottom.
- The relative importance of a person or object is indicated by size. For example, a victorious king is larger than a defeated enemy.
- All Aztec figures are shown in profile.

Aztec scribes assumed that “readers” had a certain level of understanding of symbolism. For instance, lines on the face of a figure represented wrinkles, and therefore, an old person. Color was used to make certain distinctions. Turquoise, as an example, indicated royalty.



An Aztec codex.

Interpreting an Aztec Code

Below is a scene redrawn from an Aztec book called the *Codex Mendoza*. This scene shows an Aztec marriage ceremony. Imagine you are an anthropologist. Your job is to interpret this codex scene. Write notes beside the figures in the scene to indicate what you think the Aztec scribe was describing about Aztec marriage customs.



Everyday Life Among the Aztecs



Most Aztecs spent nearly all of their lives in daily routines that revolved around their families and work. The activities of their daily lives seem familiar to us hundreds of years later.

Physical Appearance

Compared to Americans today, Aztecs were generally short, stocky people. Women averaged about 4 feet, 10 inches (1.5 m) in height, while men averaged 5 feet, 4 inches (1.6 m) tall. Their skin colors varied from dark to light brown. The typical Aztec face was broad with prominent cheekbones and wide-set black or brown eyes. Facial hair on men was considered unattractive, but shaving was not a problem. Aztec men, by nature, had very little facial hair. Facial hairs that did appear were plucked with tweezers.

Aztecs' hair was black and usually coarse and straight. Women wore their hair long and loose before they married. After that they wore their hair braided on top of their heads. Men usually cut their hair in short "bangs" over their foreheads. In the back, they cut it evenly across the nape of their necks.

Aztec Homes

An Aztec family's social class determined the type of house in which they lived. Commoner housing was generally a one-room, rectangular hut made of reeds and mud, covered with a thatch roof. On the hut's dirt floor, mats were placed for sitting and sleeping. The family's possessions usually were kept in baskets. Light was provided at night by pinewood torches. Cooking was done on an open-hearth fire, commonly in an outdoor courtyard.

In contrast to commoner housing, the homes of rulers and nobles had several rooms. Some of the highest ranking nobles had two-story homes. Walls were made of stone or mud covered with a type of plaster; roofs were flat. Although the fronts of noble houses were plain, the inside rooms opened onto lovely courtyards. Like the commoners' homes, the nobles' houses contained little furniture other than chests, baskets, and the reed mats used for sitting and sleeping.

Food and Diet

Aztec commoners and nobles not only lived in different kinds of houses, but also ate different foods. Although all Aztecs depended on maize (corn) as their basic food, the diet of the commoners was simpler and less varied than that of the nobility.

A favorite corn preparation among the commoners was a kind of gruel called *atolli* (a-TO-lee). Other corn-based foods included tortillas—thin round corn pancakes, and tamales—corn dough stuffed with vegetables or occasionally meat. The commoner diet also frequently included beans, chiles, and tomatoes, but only occasionally fish, turkey, or other wild game. Water was their most common drink.

The diet of the nobility also included corn dishes, but nobles enjoyed more variety by adding fruit, fish, turkeys, and wild game to their corn. Both commoners and nobles liked highly seasoned food, making much use of chiles in sauces. Aztec nobles were particularly fond of a chocolate beverage they drank at the end of meals. (The beef, pork, and lamb which are so much a part of most present-day American diets were absent

from all Aztec diets. Prior to the arrival of Europeans, these animals did not exist on the two American continents.)

Clothing Styles

Throughout Tenochtitlan (Te-noch-TEET-lan), commoners and nobles were distinguished by their dress. The difference was noticeable in the quality and decoration of the garments worn by the two classes, not by different styles of garments.

Nearly all Aztec clothing was made from woven material. Commoner clothing was generally woven from fibers of the spiny leaves of the maguey (ma-GAY) plant, or the stiff leaves of the yucca plant. By drying and scraping the leaves, a coarse, linen-like yarn was extracted. This yarn was woven by Aztec women on small backstrap looms. One end of the loom was tied to a stationary object, like a tree, and the other end was a strap that went around the weaver's back. The cloth produced on the looms was coarse, usually an off-white color, and in lengths of about one yard wide and three yards long. (The looms are still used by weavers in Mexico today.) Commoners did not wear shoes, and they were usually not allowed to wear jewelry.

Commoner women had two basic garments in their wardrobes, an overblouse called a *huipilli* (WEE-pee-lee) (still called *huipil* today) and a wrap-around skirt called a *cueitl* (CWA-weet). The basic garment of commoner men was a loincloth called a *maxtlatl* (MASH-tlat). Some men wore a hip cloth over the *maxtlatl*. All who could afford it also wore a *tilmatli* (til-MAH-tlee), a short cape. An Aztec man wore his *tilmatli* under his left arm and knotted over his right shoulder when walk-

ing. When sitting, he turned the cape to cover the front of his body.

The fabric used to make most of the clothing worn by the nobility was woven with cotton yarn. Because cotton was not grown in Tenochtitlan, cotton bolls were imported from outlying areas of the empire. Although woven on the same small looms as maguey and yucca fibers, cotton produced much softer cloth. Using flowers, vegetables, and minerals, cotton thread was dyed into a wide range of colors. Weavers used the various colors of yarn to produce beautiful patterns and designs for male and female noble clothing.

The basic garments of noble women were the *huipilli* and *cueitl*. The wardrobe of a noble man also included the *maxtlatl*, hip cloth, and *tilmatli*. The garments of nobility all were finer and more elaborately decorated than those of commoners, but the highest ranking rulers had the most decorated garments. In addition to their garments being made of beautifully woven material, Aztec nobility were allowed to wear certain ornaments. The highest ranking nobles favored jewelry such as gold headbands with feathers; gold armbands; and lip, ear, and nose plugs made of precious metals and stones. As shoes, nobles wore sandals made of deerskin or vegetable fiber.

In addition to the differences in the quality and adornment of Aztec commoner and noble clothing, rules required certain garments to be worn differently by the two classes. Most notably, the *tilmatli* of a male commoner could not reach below the knee, unless the wearer's legs had been wounded in battle.

Family Roles

Even within their family life, Aztecs had societal rules and traditions to follow. An Aztec husband and father was in charge of his household. He was expected to provide for his family's food and shelter and also to administer the family's property and to be a teacher to his children. Men were expected to be thrifty, energetic, and caring toward their families.

Aztec men met their families' needs by working outside the home. Commoners worked as farmers, fishermen, or craftsmen. Noblemen served as government officials, scribes, and teachers. All men were expected to be ready to serve as warriors when called upon.

Women in Aztec society were responsible for the day-to-day management of their households. All women were expected to be hard-working and attentive.

Commoner wives and mothers shopped for food in the markets, prepared meals for their families, and did the cleaning. In addition, Aztec women were expected to be skilled weavers and spent considerable time weaving cloth for their families' use as well as for tribute. The skill of weaving was considered so important that a woman who was a bad weaver was held in poor regard by others in society. Women also were charged with teaching their daughters to be good cooks and, of course, good weavers.

Although women of the noble class had servants to do much of the marketing, cooking, and cleaning, noble women were responsible for managing their households and caring for their family members. They also wove.

Children in Aztec families were taught to be respectful, obedient, and humble. They were subjected to frequent lectures by their parents and other adults about correct behavior. If lecturing did not correct misbehavior, children were scolded or sometimes beaten with a stick, pierced with maguey spines, or held over the flames of burning chiles.

An Aztec child learned most of his or her occupational and work skills from his or her parents. However, between the ages of twelve and fifteen, both boys and girls attended a school called *cuicacalli* (kwee-ka-KA-lee) which means "House of Song." Instructors at the school, located next to the temples, taught students how to sing and play musical instruments. The songs taught children about Aztec views of creation, life, death, and gods. Instruction at the House of Song began in the early evening and often lasted late into the night.

All boys fifteen years and older also attended schools to learn how to be warriors. They lived in special quarters near the school until they were ready to marry. Commoner boys attended schools called *telpochcalli* (tel-poch-KA-lee). Boys of the noble class attended schools called *calmecac* (kal-ME-kak).

Daily Routines

Like most people today, Aztec commoners spent their days working, eating, and resting. Aztecs rose at dawn and began work without breakfast. At midmorning, men returned to their homes, where the family had a meal of atollí. Fathers then resumed their work. Women and children continued their household duties until midday, when the father again came home. At this

time, the family ate its big meal—tortillas, beans, tomato sauce, and occasionally tamales. After this meal, the family rested for a few hours during the hottest part of the day. Refreshed by their rest, they went back to work for the remainder of the afternoon and early evening. When the father returned home for the night, the family ate a light evening meal, then went to sleep on their mats shortly after sunset.

The daily routine of the noble class was similar to that of the commoners except that hours were shorter and the work less physically strenuous. The nobles' work allowed them to host elaborate feasts or banquets that frequently extended late into the night. Certain jobs of the nobility required them to keep distinctly different schedules. For example, some warriors were required to work through the night, keeping watch over the city.

Beliefs and Rituals

Every important event in the Aztec life cycle was guided by specific beliefs and rituals. Such rituals began with a baby's birth, when an astrologer was called in to read the child's fate in the *Book of Days*. Aztecs believed that the date and time of birth predicted the child's future—whether he or she would be rich or poor, honorable or dishonorable. Should a child's "day" be particularly unfavorable, the astrologer might suggest holding the official bathing and naming ceremony on another, more favorable day.

For both commoners and nobles, marriage was an important family event. When girls were about age fifteen and boys about twenty, they were ready for marriage. However, their choice of

partners was thought to be too important to leave entirely to the young people. Instead, the parents of the young man employed the services of matchmakers, elderly women who discussed marriage with the parents of an eligible girl. Next, an astrologer was consulted to set a favorable wedding date. Following a series of preliminary feasts, a grand feast was held the night before the wedding. From this feast, the bride was carried in a torch-lit procession through the city streets to the groom's house. There, the matchmakers literally "tied the knot" by tying together the bride's and groom's garments.

Most Aztecs did not live to be very old. However, those who did gained extra respect and privileges. The elderly were expected to set an example of a model life and to instruct the young. A privilege that was welcomed by many of the elderly was the right to drink alcoholic beverages in public. Public drunkenness was severely punished for anyone under seventy years of age. But those older than seventy were allowed this indulgence.

The Aztecs did not seem to fear death. They had distinct beliefs about an afterworld. Most important was their belief that a person's afterlife was determined by how a person died, not by how he or she lived. In Aztec tradition, women who died in childbirth and warriors who died in battle were assured a glorious afterlife with the sun. Most people, however, were thought to descend into a place having nine levels of dark emptiness. Deceased persons could escape this darkness only through the aid of possessions buried with them—including food and, if possible, a yellow dog. The journey out of darkness lasted

four years and could be made easier if the living made offerings for the deceased.

Festivals and Pastimes

Although Aztecs could be described as being generally hardworking and rather somber, their daily routines were sprinkled with some very popular pastimes and many important public festivals.

A favorite game played by both commoners and nobles was *patolli* (pa-TO-lee), a board game much like our present-day Parcheesi. The game itself seemed to interest the players, but its attraction was heightened by the gambling that often accompanied it.

Gambling also seems to have been an important component of another pastime, *tlachtli* (TLACH-tlee), a ball game played on large outdoor I-shaped courts. Tlachtli players were required to hit a hard rubber ball through rings on the walls at center court. Players were not allowed to use their hands, so they had to keep the ball in play by hitting it with buttocks, hips, knees, and elbows. Lively and rough, the game was played mostly by noblemen, who also engaged in extravagant gambling.

Throughout the year, Aztecs participated in a number of public festivals. Many were holy days celebrated by throngs of people. Feasting, music, and dancing lasted a few hours or several days, depending on the festival. Other special events were held to commemorate special accomplishments, such as warriors returning home from battle or the completion of special building projects, such as roads or temples. Festival participation gave the

Aztecs a chance to wear their finest clothing, eat special foods, watch magnificent processions, and celebrate into the wee hours of the morning.

In both private and public life, Aztecs of all ranks were expected to follow strict rules of behavior to assure honesty, modesty, obedience, and moderation. Penalties for noncompliance were serious—often death or enslavement. Within this social atmosphere, Aztecs were born, lived out their everyday lives, shared in the public life of the empire, and went to their deaths.

STUDYING AZTEC GARMENTS: What Clothing Tells Us About Culture

Lesson Objective

To involve students in studying Aztec clothing as a way of learning about Aztec culture.

Materials Needed

- Elementary Reading pages 1 and 2, "Aztec Clothing," 1 copy per student
- Elementary Worksheet, "Recognizing the Clothing of Nobles," 1 copy per student
- Several lengths of cloth, each about 1 yard wide and 3 yards long; several strips of cloth about 3 inches wide and 3 yards long; drawing paper, 1 sheet per student; crayons, color markers, or color pencils

Teaching Strategy

SHARING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Referring to "Everyday Life Among the Aztecs," share with students relevant details about daily life in the Aztec empire. Through discussion, have students compare the everyday life of Aztecs with their own. Emphasize that although Aztec life was different from ours, Aztecs also were concerned, just as we are, about housing, food, clothing, family roles, work, beliefs, and special events.

EXPERIMENTING WITH DRAPED CLOTHING

Challenge student volunteers to create garments from the lengths of cloth you brought to class. Explain that the pieces of cloth are approximately the same size as those that Aztec women wove on their backstrap looms. Tell students that they may drape the pieces any way they like. They cannot use pins or buttons to hold their garments together, but they can use knots and narrow strips of cloth to secure them. On the chalkboard, record descriptions of the garments students create.

INTRODUCING AZTEC CLOTHING STYLES

Explain to students that one characteristic of the garments Aztecs wore was that they did not have buttons or pins. Tell them that to learn about other characteristics of Aztec clothing, they will begin by reading the two pages entitled "Aztec Clothing." Distribute copies of the reading and then have volunteers read different paragraphs.

When the students have finished reading, have them use the lengths of cloth to create the four draped garments: *maxtlail*, hip cloth, *tilmatli*, and *cueitl*. (The *huipilli* required sewn seams.) Then have students compare these garments with those they created previously when experimenting with the lengths of cloth.

Next, have students compare the common articles of clothing they wear with those worn by the Aztecs by asking the following questions:

- What are the most common garments worn by men in our culture? What are the most common garments worn by women? (*Probable answers: trousers and shirts; skirts and blouses*)
- Which Aztec garments—male or female—are more like present-day American garments? (*Probable answer: female garments*)
- What insights into Aztec culture do you gain by studying their garments? (*Sample answers: they lived in a fairly warm climate that didn't require heavy clothing; women covered their bodies more completely than men; Aztecs didn't have sewing machines that would have made sewing seams easy, so they wore more draped garments.*)

RECOGNIZING THE CLOTHING OF NOBILITY

Remind students that Aztecs were divided into commoner and noble social classes. One of the ways nobles were distinguished from commoners was through their clothing. Pass out copies of the worksheet "Recognizing the Clothing of Nobles." Review the first set of directions with students. After they have filled in the garment names and studied the pictures, read together the second set of directions. Allow time for students to color the illustrations.

Discuss the concept of distinguishing between social classes through clothing. Ask students if our society makes any comparable distinctions. Help them understand that although we do not have socially recognized classes, we can observe differences in people's clothing. Some garments are obviously more elaborate or finely made (and usually more expensive) than others. Uniforms indicate the wearers' professions. Some garments are worn by people in particular climates as protection from extreme heat or cold.

Concluding Project

Provide each student a sheet of drawing paper. Ask students to imagine themselves as Aztecs of the noble class. Using the images and weaving patterns on the worksheet, direct students to draw an illustration to show how they might look if they dressed as an Aztec noble. Emphasize that they should first design the pieces of clothing they will wear, then create and color a decorative pattern on the garments. Finally, they should adorn themselves with appropriate

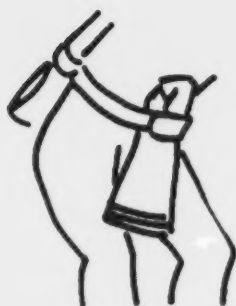
jewelry. Encourage them to review the reading pages for additional ideas.

Allow time for volunteers to show their completed drawings.

Aztec Clothing

In our country today, men usually wear pants and shirts. Women often wear skirts and blouses. Aztec men and women also dressed in common styles of garments. Study the names and styles of Aztec clothing shown below.

Male Garments



maxtlatl
(MASH-tlat)
(loin cloth)



hip cloth
(no Aztec name known)



tilmatli
(til-MAH-tlee)
(cape)

Female Garments



huipilli
(WEE-pee-lee)
(blouse)



cueitl
(CWA-weet)
(skirt)

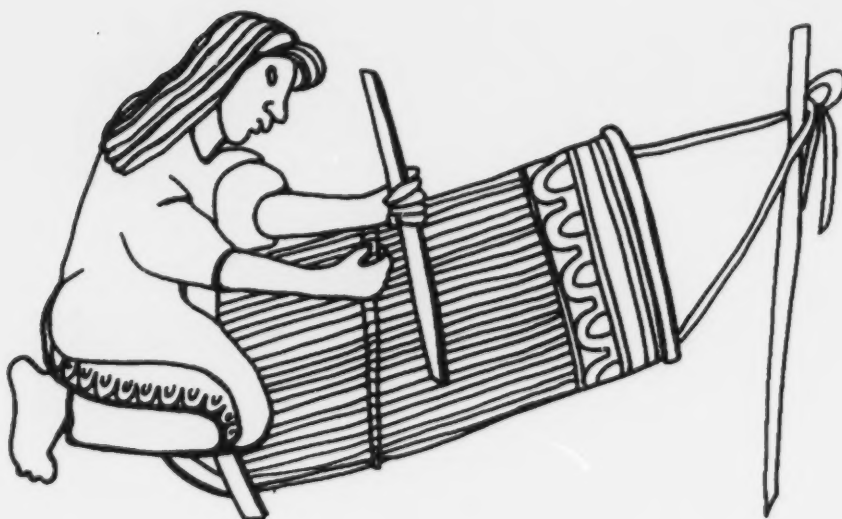
Aztec garments were all made from woven materials. The finest garments were woven from cotton thread spun from the bolls of cotton plants. Everyday garments were woven out of fiber taken from the spiny leaves of the maguey (ma-GAY) plant or from the stiff leaves of the yucca plant.

Rules in Aztec society required nobles and commoners to dress in different ways. Commoners were allowed to wear only simple clothing. It was made of fabric woven of fibers from maguey or yucca plants. Commoner clothing was mostly white. It had little or no pattern. Commoners generally went barefoot.

By contrast, nobles wore clothing made of woven cotton in elaborate patterns. The higher a noble's rank, the more decorated was his or her clothing. Nobles also wore sandals made of deerskin or woven plant fibers. Rulers and other higher-ranking nobles were the only Aztecs allowed to wear fancy jewelry. They wore gold headbands with feathers, gold armbands, and metal or stone plugs in their lips and ears.

All Aztec garments were woven by women, mostly in their homes. Women made clothing for their families. Commoner women also wove extra cloth to pay tribute or to sell at the market.

Women worked on small looms like the one shown below. The pieces of cloth woven on the loom were about one yard wide and two or three yards long. The pieces of cloth were then draped around the body.

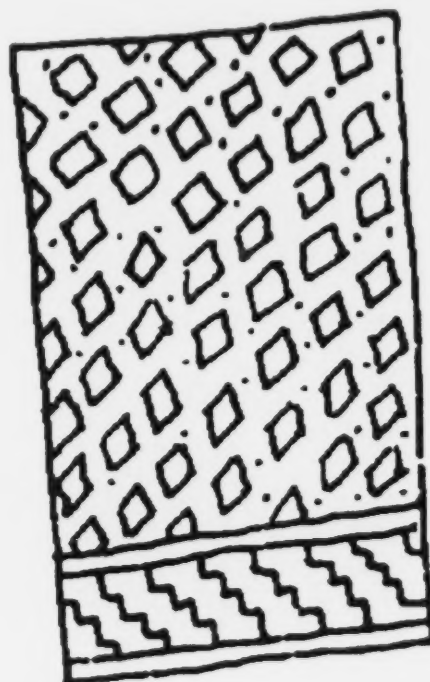
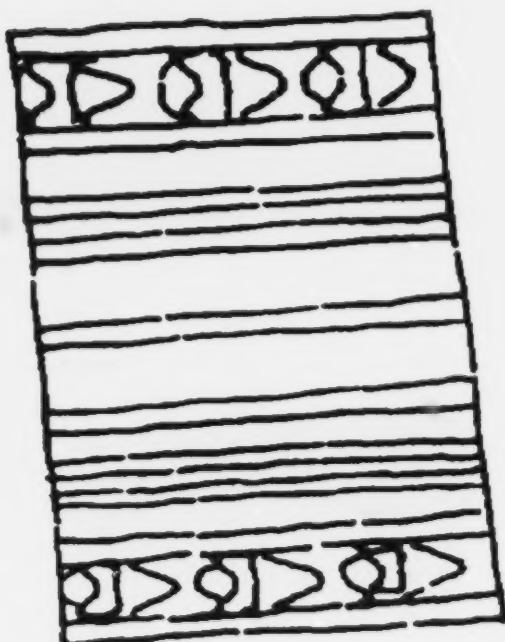


Recognizing the Clothing of Nobles

The figures below show the way an Aztec noble woman and man dressed. On the lines, write the Aztec names of the garments shown. Use the reading page for reference. Remember, nobles wore the same garments as commoners. Noble garments just had more decoration and were fancier.



Aztec women wove brightly colored patterns into cotton cloth using green, yellow, black, blue, gold, brown, red, and orange thread. The patterns below are examples of Aztec weaving. Color the patterns in colors you imagine Aztec weavers might have used.



ANALYZING AZTEC GARMENTS: *Clothing as a Reflection of Culture*

Lesson Objective

To engage students in an analysis of Aztec garments as a reflection of the Aztec culture.

Materials Needed

- Intermediate Reading, "Clothing in the Aztec Empire," 1 copy per student
- Intermediate Worksheets 1 and 2, "Identifying Aztec Garments," 1 copy per student
- Bulletin board space or 4 large sheets of poster paper; drawing paper; color marking pencils or pens; scissors; magazines or catalogs from which pictures of clothing can be cut. As an alternative to bringing magazines to class, you may prefer to assign the collection task as individual homework.
- Optional: "Everyday Life Among the Aztecs," 1 copy per student

Teaching Strategy

SHARING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Verbally share with students background information from "Everyday Life Among the Aztecs," or allow time for students to read their own copies of the section. Through discussion, encourage students to compare the everyday life of Aztecs with their own. Emphasize that although Aztec life was different from ours, Aztecs also were concerned about housing, food, clothing, family roles, work, and special events or festivals.

INTRODUCING AZTEC CLOTHING STYLES

Begin by asking students to name all the different types of clothing worn by females in our society. As students respond, list their answers on the chalkboard. (*Some examples are dresses, jackets, and swimsuits.*) Continue by directing them to

compile a comparable list of American male garments. Discuss how the lists for women and men are alike and different, and why Americans wear so many different garment types.

Emphasize that because clothing styles reveal important insights into a culture, the class will examine the Aztec culture by analyzing the clothing Aztecs wore in the early 1500s. Distribute copies of the reading page "Clothing in the Aztec Empire," and call on various students to read the paragraphs. Stop for discussion as useful.

IDENTIFYING AZTEC GARMENTS

Tell students that to study culture through clothing, they must analyze specific garments and try to determine how, where, and when the garments were worn. Pass out the two worksheets, "Identifying Aztec Garments," and explain that students are to use sheet 2 to fill in the Aztec names of the garments shown on sheet 1. Emphasize that they are to pay attention to the visual details of the garments on the first sheet as well as to read carefully the descriptions on sheet 2 (*Answers: Row 1—maxtlatl, tilmatl; Row 2—ichcap-huipilli, xicolli, ehuatl, tlahuiztli; Row 3—cueitl, huipilli; Row 4—quechquemiltl*)

When students have completed the worksheet, explain that by working with data like this, anthropologists try to draw generalizations about clothing styles and about the wearers' culture. Lead students in drawing such generalizations with questions such as

- What differences between male and female everyday garments are noticeable? (*Sample answer: the women's clothing covered more of their bodies.*)

- From the illustrations and the information on the reading page, which images show commoner clothing and which show nobility clothing? (*Commoner garments are the maxtlatl, hip cloth, and huipilli.*)
- Why did men have more special occasion garments than women? (*They participated in military activities.*)
- What might you conclude about the recreational life of Aztecs from their garments? (*Possible answer: other than special ceremonies, Aztecs did not have an extensive recreational life that required special garments. However, Aztec tlachtli ballgame players did have special garments.*)
- Based on the common garments worn by the Aztecs and those worn by Americans, what cultural differences can you distinguish? (*Possible answers: Americans have a wider range of garment styles; Aztec citizens (not in the military) had more garments designed for military use; we make fewer distinctions between male and female garments than the Aztecs did.*)

Concluding Project

Explain to students that to conclude this lesson, they will participate in the creation of a bulletin or posterboard display of Aztec and American clothing styles.

Divide students into four groups. Assign each group one of the following categories: men's everyday garments, men's special-occasion garments, women's everyday garments, women's special-occasion garments. Direct each group to prepare Aztec clothing pictures for the display by

redrawing, in larger size, the image(s) for their category shown on worksheet 1. Ask them to use color pencils or markers to color the garments as they imagine noble clothing would have looked.

Using the magazines and catalogs you've brought to class, direct groups to find and cut out pictures of modern American garments that fall into their assigned categories. Encourage groups to identify a wide range of garments for each category. (As an alternative to bringing magazines to class, this portion of the project can be assigned as homework.)

When students have finished enlarging and coloring their Aztec illustrations and have found a sufficient number of American garment pictures, have them plan and create a large bulletin board (or posterboard) display of the images. The display should show both Aztec and American garments representing each category.

After completing the display, call on volunteers to point out the likenesses and differences between the garments of the two cultures.

Clothing in the Aztec Empire

In the Aztec world, there were no unisex clothes. The most common garments worn by a man were a *maxtlatl* (MASH-tlat), or loincloth, and a *tilmatl* (til-MAH-tlee), or cape. Some men also wore a hip cloth. Women wore a wrap-around skirt, a *cueitl* (CWA-weet), and an overblouse, a *huipilli* (WEE-pee-lee).



Commoner
maxtlatl and *tilmatl*



Commoner
huipilli and *cueitl*

Rules in Aztec society determined what kind of clothing commoners and nobles could wear. Both commoners and nobles wore the same kinds of basic garments. The differences in their clothing were what it was made of and how it was decorated.

Commoners were allowed to wear only simple garments made of fibers from the spiny leaves of the maguey (ma-GAY) plant or the stiff leaves of the yucca plant. Most commoner clothing was an off-white—the natural color of the plant fibers. The garments were woven with little or no pattern. Generally, commoners went barefoot.

By contrast, most noble clothing was made from softer cotton cloth. The cloth was woven with very colorful, elaborate patterns. The higher a noble's rank, the more decorated was his or her clothing. Nobles wore sandals made of deerskin or woven plant fibers. Rulers and other higher nobles were the only Aztecs allowed to wear jewelry, including gold headbands and armbands.

Commoners and nobility also could be told apart by how they wore their garments. A male commoner was not allowed to wear his *tilmatl* below the knee unless he had leg wounds suffered in a battle. During the time his wounds healed, his *tilmatl* could extend below the knee but never to the ankle. The penalty for wearing the *tilmatl* the wrong length was death.

The wardrobes of men and women, both commoners and nobility, included special-occasion and everyday clothing. Women's special-occasion clothing was reserved for religious ceremonies. Men had special garments for military battles and religious ceremonies.

Identifying Aztec Garments

Use worksheet page 2 to identify the garments below by their Aztec names.
Write the correct name below each garment.

Men's Everyday Garments



(loincloth)



(hip cloth)



(cape)

Men's Special-Occasion Garments



(warrior shirt)



(sleeveless tunic)



(military tunic)



(bodysuit)

Women's Everyday Garments



(skirt)



(blouse)

Women's Special-Occasion Garments



(poncho)

Identifying Aztec Garments

Descriptions of Common Aztec Garments

MALE

xicolli (she-CO-lee)—A fringed, sleeveless tunic that tied in the front.

Used only in religious ceremonies by commoners and nobles.

tilmatli (til-MAH-tlee)—The most important male status garment. Worn by both classes, but a *tilmatli* worn by a commoner had to be shorter than that of a noble.

ehuatl (AY-wat)—A one-piece, tight-fitting tunic with a short skirt. Made of cloth covered with feathers. Worn on special occasions only by warriors of certain military ranks.

maxtlatl (MASH-tlat)—The most common male garment. Made from a single length of fabric that was wrapped around the waist, passed between the legs, and tied at the waist. Worn by both classes.

tlahuiztli (tla-WEETS-tlee)—A complete bodysuit made of feather-covered cloth in a variety of colors and styles. Worn only in military battles or religious ceremonies by both commoners and nobles. Warrior ranks were indicated by colors, designs, headpieces, and insignia.

ichcaphuipilli (esh-ca-wee-PEE-lee)—Padded cotton, sleeveless shirts used as armor. Basic military garment worn by both commoner and noble warriors.

hip cloth—Triangular cloth worn around the waist and usually tied on the right side. Worn over a *maxtlatl* by both classes.

FEMALE

quechquemilt (kesh-CA-meet)—Made of two rectangles of cloth laid one atop the other so they formed a square with a V at the neck. A slip-on garment worn by both classes but only for religious ceremonies in which the wearer was impersonating a goddess.

cueitl (CWA-weet)—A wrap-around skirt tied at the waist or secured with a separate belt-like strip of fabric. Worn by both classes.

huipilli (WEE-pee-lee)—Tunic or blouse that hung just a little below the hips. The basic female garment worn by both commoners and nobles.

ANALYZING AZTEC CLOTHING CONSTRUCTION: *Clothing as a Reflection of Culture*

Lesson Objective

To engage students in analyzing the types and methods of construction of Aztec garments as a reflection of Aztec culture.

Materials Needed

- Secondary Reading pages 1 and 2, "The World of Aztec Fashion," 1 copy per student
- Secondary Worksheets 1, 2, and 3 "Identifying Methods of Aztec Garment Construction," 1 copy per student
- Magazines and catalogs from which students can cut out pictures; scissors; 5 large poster sheets; glue; marking pens. As an alternative to bringing magazines to class, you may prefer to assign the collection task as individual homework.
- Reference books, encyclopedias, or world history textbooks with pictures of southern European clothing from the 1400s and 1500s.
- Optional: "Everyday Life Among the Aztecs," 1 copy per student

Teaching Strategy

SHARING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Allow time for students to read copies of "Everyday Life Among the Aztecs," or verbally share major points of the reading with them. Through discussion, encourage students to compare the everyday life of Aztecs with their own. Emphasize that although their daily life was different from ours, Aztecs were concerned, as we are, about housing, food, clothing, family roles, work, beliefs, and special events.

INTRODUCING AZTEC CLOTHING STYLES

Begin by asking students to list all the different kinds of the outer garments they have in their wardrobes. Their lists should include items such as trousers, shirts, shoes, dresses, jackets, and so on. When they are finished, ask them to answer two questions:

- Which two items on your list would you consider the most basic types of garments in your wardrobe?
- What garments in your wardrobe do you wear only for special occasions? What are the occasions?

Explain to students that anthropologists often study clothing because it gives them insights into people's culture and the times in which they lived or live. In studying clothing, these scientists might compile a list of all the clothing types they can identify (as the students did previously), then ask questions such as those the students answered about their own clothing.

Distribute copies of the reading pages "The World of Aztec Fashion," and have students read it. When they've finished, initiate a discussion about the reading. Ask students to compare their clothing styles and traditions with those of the Aztecs. Point out that although we do not distinguish between commoners and nobility in our society, we do have more and less elaborate garments. Certain garments, such as uniforms, are required for particular work situations.

IDENTIFYING METHODS OF CONSTRUCTION OF AZTEC GARMENTS

Tell students that to study culture through clothing, anthropologists analyze specific garments to determine how, where, and when the garments were worn. They also look at the ways in which garments were constructed to understand the technological skills of the people who made the clothing.

Distribute the three-page worksheet, "Identifying Methods of Aztec Garment Construction." Explain that students are to study the sheets and then use sheets 2 and 3 as a reference for identifying the Aztec name for the specific garments illustrated on sheet 1. Instruct students to indicate beside each picture whether it shows a garment worn by males or females.

(Answers: Row 1—maxtlatl, tilmatli, cueitl; Row 2—ichcaphuipilli, xicolli; Row 3—ichcaphuipilli, ehuatl, huipilli; Row 4—tlahuiztli, quechquemiltl)

Divide students into small groups and assign each group to find and cut out magazine and catalog pictures of present-day garments that exemplify the five construction styles named on worksheet 1: *Draped Garments*, *Sewn Garments with Front or Back Openings*, *Sewn Garments Without Front or Back Openings*, *Slip-on Garments*, and *Sewn Garments with Arm and Leg Coverings*. Make available the magazines and catalogs you brought to class. As an alternative, you may wish to assign the picture collection task as individual homework.

When a reasonable number of examples have been collected, direct the groups to create displays of the five construction categories by gluing the pictures on separate poster sheets.

Encourage artists in the class to redraw and enlarge the Aztec garments illustrated on worksheet 1 and add the illustrations to the appropriate posters. Have students label each poster with the name of the construction style it represents.

Lead students in a discussion of the information on their posters with questions such as these:

- Which Aztec construction style is most commonly used in our clothing? (*Probable answer: sewn garments—with and without openings*)
- The draped style was the most common Aztec form of construction. Why is it less commonly used in our culture today? (*Probable answers: draped clothing seems less convenient to wear than sewed garments; sewing is much easier for us than it was for Aztecs; our climate generally requires heavier clothing.*)
- Which Aztec garments seem most familiar to you? (*Accept answers that can be logically supported.*)
- Which American garments would probably seem most familiar to Aztecs? (*Accept answers that can be logically supported.*)
- What are some common present-day American garment types that were not used by Aztecs? (*Possible answers: female dresses, trousers, long coats*)
- What popular Aztec garment construction styles are little used in today's American garment construction? (*Probable answers: draped and slip-on*)

Concluding Project

Explain to students that the clothing styles they have been studying were being worn by the Aztecs when the first Europeans arrived in the New World. Direct students to use encyclopedias, reference books, or world history textbooks to find pictures of the clothing styles popular in southern Europe during the 1400s and 1500s.

Display the pictures of European clothing students find and help them identify the construction styles of the garments. As a concluding task, instruct students to write a one-paragraph description of the reaction they imagine the Europeans might have had to the clothing of the Aztecs. Then have students write a second paragraph describing the reaction they imagine Aztecs had to the clothing of the Europeans.

Encourage students to share their paragraphs. Call on volunteers to share any experiences they have had encountering people who dressed differently from themselves.

Conclude by explaining to students that in some areas of Mexico, such as in the Yucatan and mountain villages, women still wear huipillis and cueitls. Women continue to weave fabric for their clothing on backstrap looms. Clothing, foods (such as tortillas and tamales), and traditional agricultural methods provide important continuity in Mexico today.

The World of Aztec Fashion

Do you agree with the saying, "your clothes make a fashion statement"? Aztecs in the early 1500s probably would have agreed with the statement, but for reasons different from ours. Aztec clothing offered more than mere protection from the weather. Clothing symbolized the social class and often the activity in which the wearer was engaged.



Commoner
maxtlatl and tilmatli



Commoner
huipilli and cueitl

In the Aztec world, there were no unisex clothes. The most common garments worn by a man were a *maxtlatl* (MASH-tlat), or loincloth, and a *tilmatli* (til-MAH-tlee), or cape. Some men also wore a hip cloth. Women wore a wrap-around skirt, a *cueitl*, (CWA-weet) and an overblouse, or *huipilli* (WEE-pee-lee).

Rules in Aztec society determined what kind of clothing commoners and nobles could wear. Both commoners and nobles wore the same kinds of basic garments. The differences in their clothing were what it was made of and how it was decorated.

Commoners were allowed to wear only simple garments made of fibers from the spiny leaves of the maguey (ma-GAY) plant or the stiff leaves of the yucca plant. Most commoner clothing was an off-white—the natural color of the plant fibers. The garments were woven with little or no pattern. Generally, commoners went barefoot.

By contrast, most noble clothing was made from softer cotton cloth. The cloth was woven with very colorful, elaborate patterns. The higher a noble's rank, the more decorated was his or her clothing. Nobles wore sandals made of deer-skin or woven plant fibers. Rulers and other higher nobles were the only Aztecs allowed to wear jewelry, including gold headbands and armbands.

Commoners and nobility also could be told apart by how they wore their garments. A male commoner was not allowed to wear his *tilmatli* below the knee unless he had leg wounds suffered in a battle. During the time his wounds

healed, his tilmatli could extend below the knee but never to the ankle. The penalty for wearing the tilmatli the wrong length was death.

The wardrobes of men and women, both commoners and nobility, included special-occasion and everyday clothing. Women's special-occasion clothing was reserved for religious ceremonies. Men had special garments for military battles and religious ceremonies.

All Aztec garments were woven by women who worked on small looms that produced pieces of cloth about one yard wide and two to three yards long. These relatively small pieces of cloth influenced the way in which the Aztecs made their clothing. The most common method of construction was to drape pieces of cloth over and around the body and secure them with knots or fabric belts. Draping avoided the need for sewing. Some popular Aztec garments, especially those used in military and ceremonial activities, featured sewn seams that allowed the garments to be close fitting.

Identifying Aztec Garment Construction Styles

Use worksheets 2 and 3 to identify the garments below by their Aztec names.

Write the correct name below each garment.

Draped Garments



(loincloth)



(hip cloth)



(cape)



(skirt)

Slip-on Garments



(bodysuit)



(warrior shirt)



(military tunic)



(blouse)

Sewn Garments Without Front or Back Openings

Sewn Garments with Front or Back Openings



(jacket-like armor)



(sleeveless tunic)

Sewn Garments with Arm and Leg Coverings



(poncho)

Descriptions of Common Aztec Garments

Draped Garments

cueitl (CWA-weet)—A wrap-around skirt tied at the waist with a separate piece of cloth. Worn by both commoner and noble women.

hip cloth—Triangular cloth worn around the waist and usually tied on the right side. Worn over a *maxtlatl* by commoner and noble men.

maxtlatl (MASH-tlat)—The most common male garment. A loincloth made from a single length of fabric that was wrapped around the waist, passed between the legs, and tied at the waist. Worn by commoners and nobility.

tilmatli (til-MAH-tlee)—The most important male status garment. Worn by both classes, but the *tilmatli* of a commoner had to be shorter than that of a noble.

Sewn Garments with Front or Back Openings

xicolli (she-CO-lee)—A fringed, sleeveless tunic that tied in the front. Generally used only in religious ceremonies, but worn by both classes of men.

ichcaphuipilli (esh-ca-wee-PEE-lee)—A short padded, quilted, front-opening jacket. Cotton armor worn by Aztec warriors in battle.

Sewn Garments Without Front or Back Openings

huipilli (WEE-pee-lee)—Tunic or blouse that fell a little below the hips. The basic female garment worn by both commoners and nobles.

ehuatl (AY-wat)—A one-piece, tight-fitting tunic with a short skirt. Made of feather-covered cloth. Worn on special occasions by certain warriors.

ichcaphuipilli (esh-ca-wee-PEE-lee)—Padded cotton, sleeveless shirts used as armor. Basic military garment worn by both commoner and noble warriors.



Slip-on Garments

tlahuiztli (tla-WEETS-tlee)—A complete bodysuit made of feather-covered cloth in a variety of colors and styles. Worn only in military battles or religious ceremonies by commoner and noble men. Warrior ranks were indicated by colors, designs, headpieces, and insignia.

Sewn Garments with Arm and Leg Coverings

quechquemiltl (kesh-CA-meet)—Slip-on garment made of two rectangles of material laid one on top of the other to form a square with a V at the neck. Worn by both classes of women when impersonating goddesses in ceremonies.

Working in the Aztec Empire



At its height, the Aztec empire had an estimated population of one and a half million in the Valley of Mexico. That's a lot of mouths to feed (especially without draft animals to help with the farming) and people to clothe and house. Yet, the Aztecs were able to meet the basic needs of their people, and to go beyond the basics to create an economic system that produced a vast array of luxury goods and services.

Aztec Farming

After the Aztecs settled in Tenochtitlan (Te-noch-TEET-lan), they began farming to supply food to their people. As the population of Tenochtitlan grew, the Aztecs needed more agricultural land. To meet this need, they made small islands called *chinampas* (chee-NAM-paz) by piling up layers of mud and plants in shallow lake areas. Lakeside neighbors of the Aztecs had created the technology of chinampa building, but the Aztecs greatly added to the number of chinampas in the valley.

Chinampas were about 30 feet (9 m) wide and 330 feet (100 m) long. They were built in swampy areas of the lake by digging drainage canals through the marshes. Plots were staked off with poles lashed together with vines and filled with layers of rotting aquatic plants and mud from the lake bottom. Layers were added until the island was higher than the water level. Willow trees were planted at the corners and along the length of each chinampa. Their rapidly growing roots anchored the chinampa to the lake bottom and reduced erosion.

A wide variety of crops was grown on the chinampas. The primary crop was maize, or corn as we commonly call it. In addition, the chinampas supported crops of beans (a vital source of protein),

tomatoes, squash, chili peppers, fruits, and flowers, which were used in all religious ceremonies. Some farm families lived in huts on the chinampas.

Chinampas provided an intensive agricultural system, yielding as many as seven harvests each year. A small section of each chinampa was set aside for growing seedlings, which were then transplanted to the fields. Crops were irrigated with water from the surrounding canals and were fertilized with mud from the lake bottom and human waste. Chinampas were bordered by canals that provided water for crops and the primary means of transportation. Crops were easily loaded directly into canoes for transport to market.

In addition to the foods produced on the chinampas, mainland farmers also grew fruits, amaranth, herbs, and sometimes maguey (ma-GAY) cactus, the juice of which was fermented into an intoxicating drink that we now call *pulque* (PUL-kay).

Meat was in short supply. The Aztecs occasionally ate domesticated dogs and turkeys, and hunted deer and rabbits. The lakes provided fish, ducks, turtles, frogs, mollusks, crustaceans, and salamanders. The Aztecs also collected and ate lizards, insects, fish eggs, and grubs.

Like farmers everywhere, Aztec farmers were at the mercy of nature for the success of their crops. However, they believed their gods could help insure productivity. Of particular importance was Tlaloc (TLA-lok), the god of rain, and Chicomecoatl (Chee-ko-ma-KO-atl), the goddess of fertility and sustenance. Farmers sometimes buried small statues of these gods in their fields to insure good crops.

The Aztecs' highly productive chinampa agricultural system did not survive the Spanish conquest during the early 1500s. Failing to understand the origins of the chinampas, the Spanish drained the lakes in the Valley of Mexico so that they might begin using horses and plows to farm the land in European style. Today, Mexico City stands on a dry lake bed. The only remains of the once numerous chinampas are a few "floating gardens" in the popular Lake Xochimilco park area.

Everyday and Luxury Goods

Both Aztec farmers and city dwellers were born into a *calpulli* (kal-PO-lee)—a group of related families. The *calpulli* was the main social and economic unit of Aztec society. Each *calpulli* owned land; produced special crafts; and had its own local government, patron gods, priests, temples, elders, and schools. Although most craft products were designated for taxes or family consumption, some were loaded onto canoes and carried to various markets.

The neighborhood workshops of the *calpulli* produced everyday items, such as baskets, pottery vessels and figurines, gourd bowls, and mats. Women wove great quantities of cloth. Products were made with only simple tools of wood, obsidian, or flint.

The ceramic pottery made by local potters was finely decorated with black-on-orange patterns. Simple designs created by lines and spirals decorated the pieces used mostly for serving food. Three-legged pots were commonly produced by the Aztec potters and potters throughout Mesoamerica.

The Aztec commoners produced many forms of folk art, including miniature clay figurines

representing gods. Fertility god pieces were often placed on household altars. Clay stamps also were a popular folk art. Stamps represented images such as lizards, shells, mythical fire serpents, and butterflies. The stamps were dipped into paint and perhaps used to decorate paper, cloth, and unfired pottery.

Specialized groups of artisans produced gold, silver, and greenstone jewelry, as well as brilliantly colored leather shields, capes, and fans. The objects produced by these special artisans, called *toltecah* (tol-TE-kah), were used exclusively by the nobility. Similar to the craft guilds of medieval Europe, the *toltecah* operated on an apprentice system. Some *toltecah* were employed by rulers; others worked independently and sold their creations in the market. Although *toltecah* could never become nobility, some did become as wealthy as nobles. (For more information on products produced by the artisans, see the Background Information for "Architecture and Art of the Aztecs.")

Service Providers

Rather than produce goods, some Aztecs offered specialized services for sale. Often operating out of central marketplaces, these service providers included carpenters, barbers, cooks, porters, artisans, soothsayers, scribes, midwives, physicians, musicians, and entertainers.

Among the service providers, porters were particularly important. Without beasts of burden, all loads had to be carried in canoes or on the backs of men. Porters who hired themselves out for transport typically carried approximately 50 pounds (23 kg) on their backs. Although common people walked everywhere, on state occasions

porters were hired to carry nobles in litters, hammocks, or even on their backs, to give the impression of grandeur.

Nobles in the Aztec empire also provided services. Rulers and other government officials, judges, and warriors served the state. Highly structured and organized, the government had officials to attend to every detail of running the empire—even sweeping.

Among the best educated service providers were midwives and physicians, who often learned their trade from relatives or associates. To Aztecs, sickness and medical practices were a blend of religion, magic, and science. Although cures were often sought from gods or by magic, Aztec physicians had a sophisticated knowledge of medicine. They used as many as 132 medicinal herbs and practices such as massage and steam baths. Special military doctors traveled with the Aztec armies to treat wounds and set broken bones.

Aztec Markets

One of the hallmarks of the Aztec empire was its marketplaces. Throughout the empire every town and village had at least one market where an extensive array of goods and services were bought and sold. Markets also were the social centers of communities, with people coming to eat and trade news as well as to buy and sell.

Many of the foods and goods displayed in the market were brought by local farmers and craftsmen, the surplus they had left after providing for their own families and paying their required tribute. Service providers plied their trade in the markets, bartering alongside the sellers of foods and goods. In the larger markets,

exotic goods such as jewels and finely woven cotton cloth added extra excitement to a visitor's tour of the market. However, such goods were available only to members of the nobility.

Although most trade in Aztec markets was done through barter, the Aztecs did have four commonly accepted forms of currency: cacao beans (chocolate), lengths of cotton cloth, T-shaped copper axes, and transparent feather quills filled with gold dust. Cacao beans were the most commonly used type of currency, serving mostly as "small change." However, cacao beans were considered important enough to lead some people to counterfeit them by removing the beans from the pods and refilling the pods with soil.

The grandest of all Aztec markets was located north of Tenochtitlan, in the town of Tlatelolco (Tla-te-LOL-ko). The Tlatelolco market was open daily, with as many as 25,000 people in attendance each day.

The Spanish who first observed this market were amazed at its bustling activity and sense of orderliness and cleanliness. Every conceivable type of merchandise was offered, each sold in a specific place. Merchants and customers bought, sold, and bartered for pottery, firewood, mats, clothing, baskets, animal skins, chiles, honey, corn, tortillas, vegetables, eggs, salt, medicines, ointments, brooms, dyes, tools, and many other everyday items. Luxury items such as gold, silver, precious stones, finely woven cotton cloth, and exotic feathers were available.

Ever present in Aztec markets were judges who made certain that trading was done fairly and that honest vendors and customers were

protected from cheaters, price gougers, and thieves. The judges also collected taxes from both buyers and sellers.

The Tlatelolco market's carefully organized sections and strictly regulated trade reflected much about the Aztecs. The market's organization reflected the Aztecs' sophistication, centralized rule, enormous variety of consumer goods, extensive body of craftsmen, and distinct division of social classes. To visit an Aztec market was to see a microcosm of the Aztec empire itself.

Trade and Tribute

Trade was carried on by virtually everyone in Aztec society, but one class of traders was set apart from the rest. The *pochtecah* (poch-TE-kah) were professional long-distance merchants who specialized in hard-to-obtain luxury items desired by members of the nobility.

Pochtecah traveled on foot in caravans throughout the empire and beyond, often into hostile lands. Lacking draft animals and not using the wheel, everything the pochtecah took to and from Tenochtitlan was carried by porters, slaves, or canoes. In addition to goods, the pochtecah brought foreign customs, exotic gods, and rare luxury items back to the empire's capital.

The pochtecah belonged to a separate social class between nobles and commoners. They lived as a group in a specific area of the city, enjoyed special privileges, and had their own laws and customs. Pochtecah owned land and often accumulated great wealth in personal possessions.

Over many years, the pochtecah established a vast trade network which extended from as far south as present-day Central America to as far north

as the pueblos of the American Southwest. Some trade was supported by the Aztec rulers and, therefore, had definite political implications. In addition to trading, pochtecah often served as spies, ambassadors, and agents of the Aztec emperor.

After trade arrangements were established by the pochtecah, conquering armies of the Aztecs often followed. The main goal of such conquests was to collect tribute—taxes paid in the form of goods and services exacted by the state from its conquered people. Much of the Aztec economy was supported by tribute, and the amount increased continuously.

Tribute items collected from the provinces included exotic feathers, animal skins, gold, greenstone and turquoise jewels, richly embroidered cloth, slaves, cacao, honey, food, and, at times, sacrificial victims. This tribute was added to the food and labor paid monthly by the commoners living in and around Tenochtitlan.

Tribute demands were sent in written form to the conquered towns and villages. To enforce the demands, the feared and hated tax collectors traveled to each province to make sure that tribute was paid fully and on time.

As the wealth of the pochtecah grew, so did their influence. Historians speculate that had the Aztec empire continued to develop as it was in the early 1500s, the pochtecah might well have risen to challenge the noble class for political power. But that possibility was brought to a swift end with the conquest of the Aztecs by intruders foreign even to the well-traveled and brave pochtecah.

CREATING AN AZTEC MARKET: *The Aztec Economy*

Lesson Objective

To familiarize students with the Aztec economy by having them create and participate in an Aztec market.

Materials Needed

- Elementary Reading pages 1 and 2, "Aztec Markets," 1 copy per student
- Elementary Worksheet, "Visiting an Aztec Market," 1 copy per student
- Drawing paper, several sheets per student; poster paper, 1 sheet per student; marking pens; masking tape; string; scissors
- To recreate products exchanged in Aztec markets, students will need access to art supplies in the classroom, or you may ask them to collect such supplies at home.

Note: This lesson requires students to make or collect items to be exchanged in an Aztec market. Because this task may require out-of-class time, the lesson will probably require two class periods on separate days.

Teaching Strategy

SHARING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Tell students that in this lesson they will be studying the working life of Aztecs. Ask students to recall information they've learned in other lessons, and challenge them to identify kinds of work they think Aztecs performed.

Verbally share with the class facts from "Working in the Aztec Empire." In a follow-up discussion, help students recognize that the production and trade of goods and services in the Aztec empire was quite sophisticated. Emphasize that nearly all people participated in the Aztec economy

by both "buying" and "selling," either through barter or the use of certain goods as currency. Highlight the importance of the long-distance traders who both brought back exotic goods for the marketplaces and served as scouts for future Aztec conquest.

INTRODUCING AZTEC MARKETPLACES

Have students describe shopping in a local shopping mall, focusing their descriptions on the range of items available and the arrangement of stores within the mall. Call on volunteers who are familiar with a flea market to describe how it differs from a shopping mall. Tell students that in the reading pages you will distribute, they will learn how buying and selling took place in the Aztec world.

Distribute copies of the two elementary reading pages, "Aztec Markets." Ask various students to read paragraphs aloud. After discussing points made in the reading, ask students to compare and contrast an Aztec market with our present-day shopping malls and flea markets.

PREPARING TO RECREATE AN AZTEC MARKET

Next, pass out copies of the elementary worksheet, "Visiting an Aztec Market," and review the foods, goods, and service providers listed at the top of the page. Clarify any items or services with which students are not familiar. Instruct students to follow the directions to create a three-column chart on a separate sheet of paper. Then have them categorize each item or service listed on the worksheet as a food, good, or service.

Tell students that in preparation for the Aztec market they will recreate later in the lesson,

they must first make replicas of one product or service common in Aztec markets. To determine what product each student will offer in the market, divide students into three groups and assign the groups to represent either foods, goods, or services. Have members of each group decide among themselves which specific items from their category they will individually offer.

Direct students to obtain or create multiple replicas of the item they will sell. For example, a student selling corn may wish to bring actual corn kernels to class, while a student selling mats may wish to create paper replicas of mats. Students providing services will need to gather any equipment they need (such as a "glass" [obsidian] blade for cutting hair) and practice the skill they will sell.

Next, explain that students will need to set a price for their food, goods, or service. Have them review the reading pages and worksheet to determine how much in each of these currencies—cacao beans, cloth, axes, and quills—they think their item/service is worth. Direct them to make a price tag on a poster sheet for their item/service, modeling it after the example at the bottom of the worksheet. In the worksheet example, one gold necklace equals 8,000 cacao beans, 400 axes, 5 lengths of cloth, or 40 quills. *Note:* the values suggested on the worksheet are hypothetical, not documented values.

Finally, direct students to create the Aztec currency they will use to buy foods, goods, and services in the Aztec market. They can do this by drawing replicas of cacao beans, cloth lengths, axes,

and quills on paper slips. Encourage them to make sizable quantities of each form of currency.

Set a deadline for gathering or making the products, price tags, and money to be used in the marketplace.

Concluding Project

To conduct an Aztec market, remind students that Aztec markets were divided into sections. Either in the classroom or in a larger indoor or outdoor space, designate sections for foods, goods, and services. Have students gather in the sections of the marketplace where they will conduct their business. Direct sellers in each section to create additional subsections for their individual market offerings. For example, the food group might subdivide into raw produce and cooked food sections. When students have decided how to position themselves, give them masking tape or string to mark off their individual selling areas.

Next, direct each student to arrange his or her selling area by displaying the items or service he or she has for sale. Remind sellers to display their price tags prominently.

When all the sellers are ready, open the market by having about a third of the students leave their selling areas to buy goods or services from the remaining sellers. Announce that all buyers are of the noble class, so they may select from among any of the available items or services. Also establish that buyers may either barter or offer the sellers a form of Aztec currency. It is up to the seller to decide to accept, reject, or bargain with the buyer. Remind the class that all transactions must be calculated in the base-20 counting system used by Aztecs.

After the first group of buyers has shopped for about ten minutes, have them return to their selling areas and allow another third of the students to shop for about ten minutes. Continue the buying and selling with the final one-third of the students.

After all students have been both buyers and sellers, summarize the activity with students. Ask them to compare the advantages and disadvantages of barter, currency, and actual money. Point out that goods, such as lengths of cloth, are not all of equal value. Exchanging items of unequal value often causes disputes. By contrast, money generally carries a constant rate of value. Explain that such problems led other cultures to develop standardized coins and paper dollars, like those we use today.

Conclude by telling students that all Aztec markets had judges on the premises to settle disputes among buyers and sellers. Judges also tried to keep the trading fair for all who took part in the market.

Aztec Markets

Buying and selling in the Aztec world took place in outdoor market-places. Every town and village in the empire had at least one market. All varieties of goods and services were exchanged in the markets. Both commoners and nobles shopped, ate, and shared the latest news.

The largest market was located in Tlatelolco (Tla-te-LOL-ko), a town just north of Tenochtitlan (Te-noch-TEET-lan). Food and common household items were brought to the market by local farmers and craftsmakers. Rare goods, such as precious jewels and unusual foods, were brought to the market from distant places. As many as 25,000 people visited the Tlatelolco market each day.

Commoners brought food and household items to market. These items were what remained after the commoners paid tribute and met their own family needs. Finer objects, such as gold jewelry and feather shields, were made by artisans called *toltecah* (tol-TE-kah). These objects could be used only by the nobility. The most luxurious items were precious metals and fine cotton cloth. They were brought to market by *pochtecah* (poch-TE-kah), long-distance merchants. These traders traveled to far-away places to find rare goods to trade in the markets.

Services also were offered at an Aztec market. Haircuts, fortune-telling, carpentry, medical treatments, and musical entertainment were among the services common in Tlatelolco.

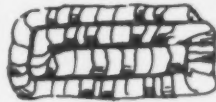
The Tlatelolco market was amazingly clean and orderly. The market was divided into sections. Each section had different goods or services displayed. Buyers went to the different sections of the market to make their purchases.

The Tlatelolco market amazed the first Spanish visitors. Men traveling with Hernán Cortés wrote that they had never seen a market so large. They had never seen such a variety of goods or so many shoppers.

Most business in Aztec markets was conducted through barter—the exchange of goods and services without using money. However, the Aztecs sometimes used the forms of currency, or money, shown below.



cacao beans



lengths of cloth



T-shaped copper axes

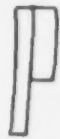
quills filled with
gold dust

The Aztec system of counting used in trading was based on units of 20. Standard symbols, shown below, were used to show the quantities 1, 20, 400, and 8,000.



= 1

circle



= 20

(1 x 20)

flag



= 400

(20 x 20)

branch



= 8,000

(20 x 20 x 20)

incense pouch

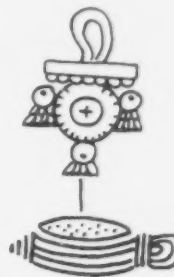
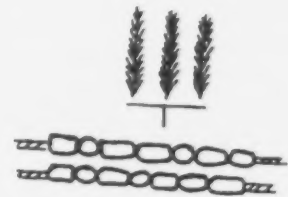
The number symbols were combined with pictures of objects to show how many. For example, the symbol for “1” combined with the drawing of a warrior suit meant that one warrior suit was available for sale or trade.



1 warrior suit



20 animal skins

8,000 lots of
copal incense1,200 strings of
jade beads

Visiting an Aztec Market

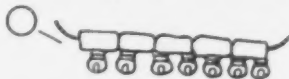
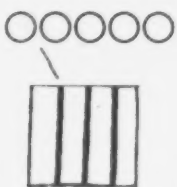
The list below names some of the many foods and goods bought and sold in Aztec marketplaces. It also identifies workers who provided services. Read the names on the list.

mats	salt	ointments
featherworkers	weavers	nuts
physicians	dyes	firewood
tools	scribes	clothing
slaves	brooms	fish sauce
dogs	chili peppers	tomatoes
cotton cloth	honey	feather fans
tamales	corn	chocolate drink
pottery	porters	herbs
eggs	metalworkers	turkeys
carpenters	baskets	gemstone workers
needles	fortune-tellers	toasted seeds
entertainers	animal skins	jewels
barbers	tortillas	druggists
medicines	vegetables	beans

On a separate sheet of paper, create a three-column chart. Title the columns Foods, Goods, and Services. Choose from the list above and write the products and services in the appropriate columns of your chart.

Showing Values in an Aztec Market

On the lines, identify the items and values indicated by each set of symbols.

	 = 1 gold necklace			
(beans)	(cloth)	(axes)	(quills)	

READING AND WRITING TRIBUTE DEMANDS: *The Aztec Economy*

Lesson Objective

To introduce students to aspects of the Aztec economy by engaging them in reading and writing tribute demands.

Materials Needed

- Intermediate Reading pages 1 and 2, "Aztec Markets, Trade, and Tribute," 1 copy per student
- Intermediate Worksheet, "Writing an Aztec Tribute Demand," 1 copy per student
- Optional: "Working in the Aztec Empire," 1 copy per student

Teaching Strategy

SHARING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

If you have copied "Working in the Aztec Empire" for students, allow time for them to read the information. If not, verbally share the major points of the reading with them. In discussion, help students recognize that the production and trade of goods and services in the Aztec empire was quite sophisticated. Emphasize that nearly all people participated in the economy by both buying and selling goods and/or services, either through barter or the use of certain forms of currency. Highlight the importance of tribute in fueling the Aztec economy.

INTRODUCING AZTEC MARKETS, TRADE, AND TRIBUTE

Explain to students that one way in which Aztecs and present-day cultures are alike is that people of both cultures engage in the buying and selling of goods and services. Instruct them to read copies of the two reading pages, "Aztec Markets, Trade, and Tribute," which you have distributed.

After they have read the information, lead a discussion that includes questions such as

- Compare our shopping malls with Aztec marketplaces. How are they alike and different? (Possible answers: *alike—they both include many products; they are both social centers; they both offer services. different—department stores in shopping malls include all kinds of products; many mall stores are owned by chains that have stores of the same name in other malls; there is no bartering in mall stores; any buyers can buy any products—if they have sufficient money.*)
- Aztecs valued items such as jaguar skins, jade, gold, and cacao beans which pochtecah acquired in distant lands. What luxury items do we value today? (Accept all supportable answers; possible answers include *precious stones, fine mechanical products, sophisticated electronic equipment, musical instruments, elegant clothing.*)
- Referring to the tribute items shown on the second reading page, would you say that Aztec rulers were more interested in obtaining practical or luxury goods from the people they conquered? (*luxury*) Why would they have preferred these goods? (Because they acquired the everyday goods they needed from the commoners in and around Tenochtitlan.)

UNDERSTANDING AN AZTEC TRIBUTE DEMAND

Emphasize that the strength of the Aztec economy was largely dependent on the tribute collected from both local commoners and conquered people in outlying provinces. Distribute copies of the worksheet "Writing an Aztec Tribute Demand." Tell students that the worksheet explains how tribute demands were written. Direct them to read the sheet and identify on the appropriate lines the quantities of warrior suits, skins, copal, and beads indicated by the symbols.

Before students begin writing their own tribute demands, encourage them to consider seriously the items and amounts they will specify. Point out that amounts must not be greater than the conquered people can supply and that the variety of items demanded meet the needs of all nobles under their jurisdiction.

Concluding Project

When students have completed their tribute demands, direct them to exchange papers. On a separate sheet of paper, have each student interpret, in words and numbers, the items and quantities specified in the tribute demand he or she has received.

After all tribute demands have been interpreted, return the demands and interpretations to the original authors. Have the authors check to make certain their demands were correctly understood by the interpreters. Then call on volunteers to share their demands and the reasoning behind them. Discuss the reasoning Aztecs may have used in setting tribute demands.

Conclude by asking students to tell how Aztec tribute was like the taxes we pay today. (Possible answers: *their government told citizens how much tribute to pay; tribute was collected on a regular basis; tribute paid by commoners was somewhat like our income tax.*) Then ask, "In what ways did tribute differ from our taxes?" Help students recognize that we elect representatives who decide how much we will be taxed, that we pay in money rather than goods or services, that nearly all wage earners are required to pay income taxes, and that we are not bothered by tax collectors—unless we fail to pay our taxes. Our taxes are not as onerous as was Aztec tribute.

Aztec Markets, Trade, and Tribute

The Spanish soldiers who first saw the great market at Tlatelolco (Tla-te-LOL-ko) were very impressed. As the soldiers were to learn, markets flourished throughout the Aztec empire. Every town and village had at least one. Some markets were open every day. Others were open every five days. All varieties of goods and services were exchanged in the markets. Market-places also were a social center where shoppers came to eat and share the latest news.

The Tlatelolco market located just north of Tenochtitlan (Te-noch-TEET-lan), was the economic center of the Aztec world. Food and common household items were brought to the market by local farmers and craftspeople. Goods from throughout the empire also flowed into this centrally located market. The amazing display of products attracted as many as 25,000 people, both commoners and nobles, each day.

Everyday items exchanged in Tlatelolco included pottery, firewood, mats, clothing, baskets, animal skins, chiles, honey, tortillas, vegetables, herbs, tamales, eggs, needles, medicines, salt, brooms, ointments, dyes, and tools. Some markets in other towns were famous for their specialized trade in slaves, dogs (for eating), finely woven cotton cloth, ceramics, and jewels. Also available in the markets were services offered by carpenters, barbers, porters, artisans, soothsayers, scribes, midwives, physicians, musicians, entertainers, and other tradesmen.

The Tlatelolco market was remarkably clean and orderly. The market was divided into sections where specific goods or services were displayed. Visitors moved from section to section to buy or trade for the goods and services they sought.

The most valuable items sold in Tlatelolco were those brought to the market by professional long-distance traders called *pochtecah* (poch-TE-kah). Pochtecah specialized in bringing to market hard-to-obtain luxury items desired by the nobility, such as tropical feathers, jaguar skins, gold, jade, and fine cloth.

Pochtecah traveled on foot in caravans throughout the empire and beyond, often into hostile lands. In addition to trading for items with the people they encountered, pochtecah sometimes served as spies for Aztec rulers. Pochtecah reported on new communities, trade routes, and valuable items they discovered. Many communities discovered by the pochtecah were eventually conquered by the Aztecs.

With conquest came the Aztec demand for tribute—taxes collected by the state in the form of goods and services. Because the Aztec economy was supported largely by tribute, demands were strictly enforced by tribute collectors. Feared and hated, collectors traveled to each province to make sure tribute was paid fully and on time.

The items shown below are some of the most common forms of tribute collected by Aztec tribute collectors.



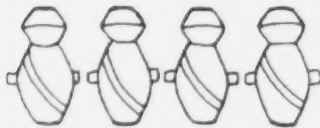
tilmatli (capas)



gold ornaments



bowls



jars of honey



bins for
storing grain



strings of
jade beads



cacao beans
(in a basket)



tlahuiztli (bodysuits)



animal skins



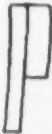
copal (incense)



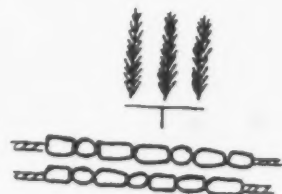
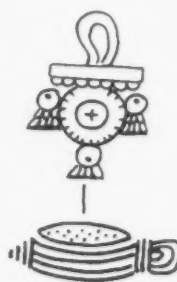
feathers

Writing an Aztec Tribute Demand

To collect tribute, Aztec rulers sent written demands to the people they conquered. The quantity of each item required was shown by one of four symbols shown below: a circle, flag, pine branch, or incense pouch. The Aztecs used a system of counting based on units of 20. Except for the circle, the symbols stand for 20 or multiples of 20.

	= 1		= 20 (1 x 20)		= 400 (20 x 20)		= 8,000 (20 x 20 x 20)
circle		flag		branch		incense pouch	

On the line below each item, write the quantity and name of the object required. Use page 2 of the reading "Aztec Markets, Trade, and Tribute" to find out the names of the items.



Imagine yourself an Aztec ruler who is writing a tribute demand to a recently conquered town. Study the common tribute items shown on reading page 2. From those items, select the ones you will include in your demand. Then determine how many of each item you will require. Write your Aztec-style tribute demand in the space below.

DETERMINING VALUES IN A BARTER MARKET: *The Aztec Economy*

Lesson Objective

To introduce students to the Aztec economy by engaging them in determining values of products and/or services in a market that does not use a standardized currency.

Materials Needed

- Secondary Reading pages 1, 2, and 3 "Life in the Aztec Economy," 1 copy per student
- Secondary Worksheet, "Setting Exchange Rates in the Aztec Economy," 1 copy per student
- Poster paper sheets, 10–12; marking pens
- Optional: "Working in the Aztec Empire," 1 copy per student

Teaching Strategy

SHARING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

If you have copied "Working in the Aztec Empire" for students, allow time for them to read the pages. If not, verbally share major points of the reading with them. In discussion, help students recognize that the production and trade of goods and services in the Aztec empire was quite sophisticated. Emphasize that nearly all Aztecs participated in the economy by both buying and selling goods and/or services, either through barter or the use of certain goods that were recognized as currency. Highlight the importance of tribute in fueling the Aztec economy.

INTRODUCING THE AZTEC ECONOMY

Write the following definition on the chalkboard:

Economy: a system for producing and distributing goods and services to fulfill people's wants.

Call students' attention to the definition of an economy and challenge them to keep the definition in mind as they read the three pages entitled "Life in the Aztec Economy." Distribute copies of the pages. After students have finished reading, direct a discussion by asking questions such as

- Who were the producers in the Aztec economy? (Nearly all Aztec adults and adults in conquered provinces produced either goods or services. Most of the labor of commoners was directed toward meeting personal needs and paying required tribute; however, their surplus goods or services were traded in Aztec marketplaces. Members of the noble class also were producers, but most of their labor was government service and welfare.)
- How were goods and services distributed in the Aztec economy? (Goods and services paid as tribute were held or distributed by the emperor; other goods and services were freely traded in marketplaces, mostly through barter—the exchange of goods and/or services without any form of currency.)
- Who were the consumers in the Aztec economy? (Nearly all Aztecs were consumers; however, commoners were not allowed to acquire certain goods reserved for the nobility, even if they had sufficient "currency.")
- How was the Aztec economy like our economy? (Possible answers: nearly everyone was a producer; everyone was a consumer; there was a degree of free distribution; tribute was paid by most citizens; most goods

and services were traded in marketplaces.)

- How was the Aztec economy unlike ours? (Possible answers: one segment of the society (the nobility) was supported by the labor of others (commoners); the tribute system dictated how a large amount of Aztec goods was distributed; only commoners paid taxes; exchange in the Aztec economy was based on barter or on certain goods recognized as mediums of exchange rather than on a standardized currency.)

DETERMINING EXCHANGE RATES IN A BARTER ECONOMY

Point out to the class that without a standardized currency, traders in Aztec markets had to agree on fair values for the goods and services they bought and sold. Distribute copies of the worksheet "Setting Exchange Rates in the Aztec Economy" and read through the first two sections with students. Clarify for them that although Aztecs agreed to use beans, cloth, axes, and quills as mediums of exchange, they still faced the problem of deciding how many beans or cloth lengths equaled the product or service to be purchased. Make sure that students understand the base-20 system for counting.

Call students' attention to the chart at the bottom of the page. Explain that the items listed on the left were goods commonly traded in Aztec markets. To the right of the items are the quantities of cloth which were the price of the items. The prices in cloth are based on Aztec records. However, the exchange rate for the other three forms of currency—beans, axes, and quills—is not known. Direct students to determine what

they think would be fair rates of exchange if a buyer were to use beans, axes, and quills to purchase the items listed on the left. Explain that when they have completed their chart, they will have created an exchange-rate table.

Concluding Project

When students have finished their exchange-rate tables, point out that in a barter economy both the buyer and seller must negotiate on the relative values of the items to be exchanged. Tell students that to experience such negotiations, they will work in groups of four to negotiate a fair price in beans, axes, and quills for the items on the left. Divide the students into groups, and direct them to conclude their negotiations in about ten minutes. Have them display their decisions by drawing an exchange rate table on a poster sheet, making it large enough to be seen at a distance.

When the groups of four have come to agreement, combine the small groups into two larger groups—each with about one half the class members. Direct these two large groups first to share their poster sheets showing the exchange-rate decisions they made in their smaller groups. Then have the larger groups negotiate an exchange-rate table upon which all members of their group can agree. Allow 10 to 15 minutes for these larger group negotiations. Direct each group to prepare a poster sheet showing their group's final exchange-rate agreements.

When the negotiations of the two large groups are completed, share their final decisions as shown on their poster sheets. Analyze the similarities and differences in their decisions. Encourage discussion on how differences might be negotiated.

Conclude the activity by having students discuss the problems of determining relative values in strict or modified barter systems. Help students recognize how a standardized currency of coins and paper money helps resolve disputes about the relative value of goods and services.

Life in the Aztec Economy

The Spanish soldiers who first saw the great market at Tlatelolco (Tla-te-LOL-ko) were very impressed. As the soldiers were to learn, markets flourished throughout the Aztec empire. Every town and village had at least one. Some markets were open every day. Others were open every five days. All varieties of goods and services were exchanged in the markets. Market-places were also a social center where shoppers came to eat and share the latest news.

The Tlatelolco market, located just north of Tenochtitlan (Te-noch-TEET-lan), was the economic center of the Aztec world. Food and common household items were brought to the market by local farmers and craftspeople. Goods from throughout the empire also flowed into this centrally located market. The amazing display of products attracted as many as 25,000 people, both commoners and nobles, each day.

Everyday items exchanged in Tlatelolco included pottery, firewood, mats, clothing, baskets, animal skins, chiles, honey, tortillas, vegetables, herbs, tamales, eggs, needles, medicines, salt, brooms, ointments, dyes, and tools. Some markets in other towns were famous for their specialized trade in slaves, dogs (for eating), finely woven cotton cloth, ceramics, and jewels. Also available in the markets were services offered by carpenters, barbers, porters, artisans, soothsayers, scribes, midwives, physicians, musicians, entertainers, and other tradesmen.

The Tlatelolco market was remarkably clean and orderly. The market was divided into sections where specific goods or services were displayed. Visitors moved from section to section to buy or trade for the goods and services they sought.

The most valuable items sold in Tlatelolco were those brought to the market by professional long-distance traders called *pochtecah* (poch-TE-kah). Pochtecah specialized in bringing to market hard-to-obtain luxury items desired by the nobility such as tropical feathers, jaguar skins, gold, jade, and fine cloth. More exotic and luxurious goods often came from distant reaches of the empire to this centrally located market.

The variety of foods, goods, and service providers available in the Tlatelolco market, as well as smaller markets, was extensive. Some of them are listed below.

mats	weavers	vegetables
featherworkers	dyes	ointments
physicians	scribes	nuts
tools	brooms	firewood
slaves	canoes	clothing
dogs	chili peppers	fish sauce
cotton cloth	honey	tomatoes
tamales	corn	feather fans
pottery	porters	chocolate drink
beads	metalworkers	herbs
eggs	baskets	turkeys
carpenters	paper	gemstone workers
needles	fortune-tellers	toasted seeds
entertainers	animal skins	jewels
barbers	tortillas	druggists
medicines		beans
salt		lip plugs

The Tlatelolco market was remarkably clean and orderly. The market was divided into sections, with specific goods or services displayed in each section. Buyers moved between sections to trade.

The most valuable of items sold in Tlatelolco were brought to the market by professional long-distance traders, *pochtecah* (poch-TE-kah). Pochtecah specialized in bringing to market hard-to-obtain luxury items desired by the nobility such as tropical feathers, jaguar skins, gold, precious stones, and fine cloth.

Pochtecah traveled on foot in caravans through the empire and beyond, often into hostile lands. In addition to trading for items with the people they encountered, pochtecah sometimes served as spies for Aztec rulers. When pochtecah found a group of people beyond the Aztec empire with goods or talents that might be of value to the Aztecs, they reported their findings to the

rulers. Many groups of people discovered by the pochtecah were eventually conquered by the Aztecs.

With conquest came the Aztec demand for tribute—taxes collected by the state in the form of goods and services. Because the Aztec economy was supported largely by these taxes, tribute demands were strictly enforced by tribute collectors. Feared and hated, collectors traveled to each province to make sure tribute was paid fully and on time.

Although the most common means of exchange in Aztec markets was barter, the Aztecs had several forms of currency: cacao (chocolate) beans, lengths of cotton cloth, T-shaped copper axes, and transparent quills filled with gold dust. Cacao beans were the most frequently used form of currency. They varied in value depending on their size and quality. Even more valuable than cacao beans were certain types of cotton cloth. One length of particularly high quality cloth could be worth as many as 300 cacao beans.

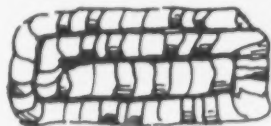
Without a standardized currency like our coins and paper bills, buying and selling led to numerous disagreements about the value of specific items. Judges stationed within the marketplace regulated prices; settled disputes; and protected honest vendors and customers from cheaters, price gougers, and thieves.

Setting Exchange Rates in the Aztec Economy

Although barter was the most common form of exchange in Aztec markets, four kinds of currency were commonly used.



cacao beans



lengths of cloth



T-shaped copper axes

quills filled with
gold dust

Aztecs used a base-20 counting system. All trading was done in units or multiples of 20. Standardized symbols were used to represent 1, 20, and multiples of 20.



= 1

= 20
(1 x 20)= 400
(20 x 20)= 8,000
(20 x 20 x 20)

circle

flag

branch

incense pouch

Without a standardized currency, relative prices of specific items were difficult to set. The chart below shows the price in lengths of cloth for the six items named on the left side. Translate the quantity symbols into numbers and write the numbers in the parentheses. Complete the chart by showing, Aztec-style, how many beans, axes, and quills you think would equal the value of the items on the left.

Value in Four Mediums of Exchange

Items to be Sold	Lengths of Cloth	Cacao Beans	Copper Axes	Quills
dugout canoe	○ ○ ()			
100 sheets of paper	○ ()			
gold lip plug	┐ ()			
warrior's costume	┐ ┐ ┐ ()			
feather cloak	┐ ┐ ┐ ┐ ┐ ()			
jade beads	┐ ()			

Architecture and Art of the Aztecs



At the height of its power in 1519, the Aztecs' capital city, Tenochtitlan (Te-noch-TEET-lan), stood as the crown jewel of the far-flung empire. An island city of about 250,000 people, Tenochtitlan was one of the most populous cities in the world at the time. It covered a five-square-mile area.

Three large causeways from the south, north, and west connected Tenochtitlan to the mainland. The causeways allowed people to travel by foot to and from the capital. Removable bridges spanned the causeways; they could be moved if the Aztecs were threatened by invasion across the causeways. Canals throughout the island served as streets for canoe traffic that transported people and goods throughout the city. Canoes also traveled back and forth to the island-city from the mainland.

At the center of Tenochtitlan was a huge ceremonial plaza, the sacred precinct. North of the precinct was the large marketplace of Tlatelolco (Tla-te-LOL-ko). The rest of the city was divided into quadrants that were further divided into as many as 80 residential districts, similar to our neighborhoods. Each district had its own plaza with a temple, school, and other religious and political buildings.

The Sacred Precinct

The sacred precinct was the center of Tenochtitlan. Elaborate ceremonies and political events took place there amid lively color, sound, and the bustle of priests and warriors in colorful dress. Paper and feather banners floated on the wind, held aloft by stone standard bearers.

Dominated by an enormous temple, the Templo Mayor, the walled precinct measured about 547 yards (500 m) on each side. At one time, the precinct may have held as many as 78 structures, including the temple of Quetzalcoatl (Ket-tsal-KO-atl), the temple of Tezcatlipoca (Tes-kat-lee-PO-ka), a school for young noblemen, a ritual ball court, quarters for Eagle and Jaguar warriors, and a skull rack—a structure of upright wooden posts between which skulls of sacrificed victims were strung like beads.

The precinct was aligned with the four cardinal directions. The Templo Mayor faced west. The precinct's east side was bordered by a wide canal; on the south was Moctezuma's palace. Luxurious homes of high-ranking officials probably surrounded the precinct on the north and west sides.

Templo Mayor

The Templo Mayor was the physical, spiritual, and political heart of Tenochtitlan—and of the Aztec world. It was topped with two shrines dedicated to Tlaloc (TLA-lok)—god of rain, and Huitzilopochtli (Wee-tsee-lo-POCH-tlee)—god of war and the sun. The shrines symbolized the underlying duality of Aztec culture: fertility and warfare—life and death. The stepped pyramid of the Templo Mayor dominated the landscape of Tenochtitlan, symbolizing the political dominance of the Aztecs and the power they held over their empire.

When the Spanish conquistadores first saw the Templo Mayor, in 1519, they were truly amazed. The highly polished white stucco stepped pyramid with the two shrines on top rose about 130 feet (40 m) in the air. Its base extended approximately 260 feet (80 m) on each side.

Priests and sacrificial victims climbed 110 very steep stairs, which were stained with the blood of sacrificed humans. The shrine to Tlaloc was decorated with blue and white vertical stripes; Huitzilopochtli's shrine had red walls decorated with white stone skulls. On the Huitzilopochtli side, bodies of captives were rolled down the stairs to land on the stone dedicated to Coyolxauhqui (Ko-yol-sha-UH-kee), goddess of the moon.

Priests burned copal incense in braziers in the temple and blew conch shell trumpets at intervals throughout the day and night. Buildings at the base of the temple provided quarters for the priests.

The Templo Mayor was built in stages, with new, larger stages enclosing smaller, older stages like nested Russian dolls. Beginning with the original mud and reed temple built in honor of Huitzilopochtli, in 1325, the Templo Mayor grew enormously in size and magnificence.

The Templo Mayor was enlarged for several reasons. Sometimes its base was raised due to flooding and structural defects caused by the unstable lake bed. Most often, however, enlargements were made by rulers to celebrate their coronations and to validate the power of the Aztec empire. Not all new construction completely enclosed the previous temples. In many cases, only a new, more magnificent facade was added.

Although awed by the Templo Mayor, the Spanish conquerors were shocked by the human sacrifices conducted there. They partially destroyed the temple and used the stones to build a cathedral nearby. In time, the rest of the temple was buried until none of it was left exposed.

Rediscovering the Templo Mayor

At 9:00 A.M. on February 21, 1978, an anonymous phone call reported a major discovery. Workmen digging a trench had discovered "the arm of a goddess." News rapidly spread throughout Mexico City—the Templo Mayor of the Aztecs had been discovered. The arm belonged to the great round sculpture of the Aztec moon goddess, Coyolxauhqui.

The discovery of the Coyolxauhqui stone began an unprecedented archaeological excavation. With a scientific team aided by hundreds of workmen skilled in excavation, the remains of the Templo Mayor have been slowly unearthed. In the course of the excavation, six layers of the enlarged temple have been identified. The first mud and reed temple to Huitzilopochtli has not been excavated. Because modern Mexico City is slowly sinking into the former lakebed, the original temple probably lies beneath the current water table.

Between the stages of the temple and beneath the large stone patios, archaeologists have discovered offerings buried by the Aztecs. The offerings contain items dedicated to Tlaloc and Huitzilopochtli. Some objects were made by the Aztecs, but most were from tribute-paying regions of the empire. Other items were antiques, originating in ancient cultures such as Olmec and Teotihuacan (Te-o-tee-WA-kan). The offerings also include many animal, plant, and human remains.

More than 100 separate offerings, containing over 7,000 objects, were discovered. The greatest number of offerings dated from 1440 to 1486, a period of great military expansion in the Aztec empire. Offerings were found in three chambers

beneath the stone floors, in movable stone chests with stone lids, and buried directly in the rubble between the stages of the pyramid construction.

Offerings to Tlaloc differed from those to Huitzilopochtli. As the rain god, Tlaloc's offerings included many statues representing the god himself, with his characteristic mask of "goggle" eyes and fangs. Symbols of water, among them greenstone, shells, and animals associated with water, such as crocodiles, fish, turtles, and frogs were found within the Tlaloc offerings.

Huitzilopochtli's status as god of war netted him offerings symbolic of his power and strength. Such symbols included braziers (small burners used to burn incense), knives, and human skulls, as well as many objects from tribute-paying regions of the Aztec empire.

Aztec Artwork

In addition to the masterful architecture, Aztec artisans created beautiful smaller works of art. Among the finest creations produced by Aztec artists were stone carvings, metalworks, and featherwork. These objects could be used only by the nobility or as offerings to the gods.

Aztec stone sculptors had only simple stone tools, bird bones, fiber cords, water, and sand to carve hard volcanic stone. Among the largest of their works were huge standard bearer sculptures that were placed on or near temples. During ceremonies and festivals, the sculptures held feather banners. Smaller figures were also created by stone workers, many of whom had a fondness for animal images. Aztec artists took great care to portray the special traits of the creatures who shared their natural world. On serpents they care-

fully carved scales, fangs, and rattles; on jaguars, they sculpted the spotted pelts and sensuous body lines; and on insects, they carved the details of wings and legs. These realistically carved sculptures demonstrate the patience and skill of some of Precolumbian America's finest artists.

Aztec gemstone workers used a variety of stones including jade, turquoise, rock crystal, obsidian, amethyst, amber, and bloodstone. Of all the precious stones, jade was the most valued. Many of the gemstones were made into jewelry. Jade, turquoise, and obsidian also were favorite materials for creating masks, often used as offerings to the gods.

Many Aztec masks were made by inlaying gemstones over a human skull. In addition to gemstones, Aztec jewelry makers also worked with metals. Copper was a favorite metal for jewelry, as well as for needles and fishhooks. From gold and silver, the most elegant of necklaces and ear and nose ornaments were made.

Featherworkers made brightly colored fans and shields by tying or gluing feathers onto fabric or animal skins stretched over reed frameworks. They also made elaborate banners, warrior costumes, and noblemen's capes by attaching feathers to cloth or paper. Most common feathers were red and yellow; the rarest and most precious were blue and green. Many common feathers were dyed. Exotic feathers were collected from tropical birds such as parrots, macaws, spoonbills, and quetzals. The two long, green tail feathers from the quetzal were the most valuable feathers of all. Only the ruler was allowed to wear them.

Although archaeological excavation has produced many examples of Aztec stone and metalwork, few creations of featherworkers have survived the nearly 500 years since the fall of the Aztec empire. The beauty of their work can be imagined only from the descriptions of the Spanish chroniclers who witnessed their existence.

Looking Back

As an architectural work, the Templo Mayor was a masterpiece of Aztec design and construction. The buried treasures found inside attest to the artistic skill of Aztecs and those they conquered. However, the temple and its offerings take on even more significance when studied in the context of the Aztec political and spiritual beliefs and practices.

UNEARTHING THE SPLENDORS OF THE GREAT TEMPLE: *Buildings and Offerings to the Gods*

Lesson Objective

To acquaint students with highlights of Aztec architecture and art by having them create a model of the Templo Mayor and identify an array of precious objects to be buried in the temple as offerings.

Materials Needed

- Elementary Reading, "The Aztecs as Builders and Artists," 1 copy per student
- Elementary Worksheet, "Burying Offerings," 1 copy per student
- Templo Mayor drawing, Insert (back cover pocket), 1 copy per student
- Scissors; tape; color pens, pencils, or crayons

Teaching Strategy

SHARING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Referring to information in "Architecture and Art of the Aztecs," share with students facts about the impressive architecture and artwork of the Aztecs. In preparation for the activities they will do in the lesson, emphasize that the sacred precinct lay in the heart of Tenochtitlan, a large city that was divided into residential districts much like our suburbs. Impress students with the importance of the archaeological discovery of the Templo Mayor, meaning Great Temple, as the physical, spiritual, and political heart of the Aztec world. Explain how archaeologists use such sites to learn more about historic cultures. As you discuss Aztec artwork with students, have them consider the kinds of art objects we value today.

INTRODUCING AZTEC ARCHITECTURE

Distribute to students copies of the reading page "The Aztecs as Builders and Artists" and call on volunteers to read paragraphs aloud. As they read about the Templo Mayor, emphasize that the Aztecs built all of their great buildings without the use of draft animals or mechanical devices. Explain that although we know much about how the Aztecs' buildings looked, we do not know exactly how they created their architectural designs or how they constructed the buildings.

STUDYING A MODEL OF THE TEMPLO MAYOR

Remind students that the Templo Mayor was the grandest example of all Aztec architecture. Emphasize that the Aztec temple was a stepped pyramid, not a straight-walled pyramid like those in Egypt. If possible, show the students pictures of the Egyptian pyramids and have them compare the two basic shapes.

Distribute copies of the Templo Mayor drawing. Have students color and decorate their drawings as they think the temple might have looked during the time of the Aztecs.

Point out to students the size of the Templo Mayor. Tell them that it was about as tall as a 13-story building and that each side of the base was almost as long as a football field. Compare the size of the Templo Mayor to buildings the students recognize.

Concluding Project

Remind students that in their reading, they learned that Aztecs placed objects of importance as offerings to their gods inside the Templo Mayor. Distribute copies of the worksheet "Burying Offerings," and read the first paragraph with

students. Have them study and identify the objects arranged in the offering chest.

Point out to the class that today we do not make physical offerings to gods as the Aztecs did. However, we do value certain objects and treat them with special care. Some objects, such as art objects, are valued by many people. Other objects may have value only to an individual or a family.

Call on a student to read the second paragraph and clarify with the class that they are to think of and list present-day objects they would personally value enough to save by burying them. Have the students complete the worksheet.

To make this activity more realistic, you may wish to have students put actual objects in boxes to simulate offerings in stone chests.

Call on volunteers to describe the objects they included in their chests. Point out similarities and differences among their choices. Conclude by asking the following questions:

- What categories of objects did Aztecs value as offerings? *(Possible answers: fine jewelry, exotic or rare objects, religious objects, everyday objects, rare plant and animal remains)*
- What categories of objects do we value enough today to save? *(Accept all logical answers, but expect students to identify expensive objects, rare objects, and items of personal value such as photos.)*
- In what kinds of buildings do we store items considered by many people to be valuable? *(Possible answers: museums, libraries, churches, banks)*
- How do individuals or families preserve objects they consider valuable? *(Accept all logical answers, but expect students to suggest ideas such as safes, albums, curio cabinets, and cedar chests.)*
- Why do you think all cultures identify and save precious objects? *(Accept all supportable answers.)*

The Aztecs as Builders and Artists

Just as Washington, D.C. is the capital of our nation, Tenochtitlan was the capital of the Aztec empire. Like Washington, Tenochtitlan was the center of government for Aztecs. It was also the heart of the empire's art and religion.

Located in the center of the city was a walled area called the sacred precinct. In the sacred precinct were the Aztecs' finest buildings. There were religious temples, a school, buildings where warriors lived, and a sacred ball court. Bordering the area was the emperor's palace and the homes of other nobles. The buildings were large, beautifully designed, and glistening white accented with bright colors.

The most important building in the sacred precinct was the Templo Mayor, meaning the Great Temple. The temple was pyramid-shaped, but it had stepped sides and a flat top. On the top were two shrines, small buildings. One shrine was dedicated to Tlaloc (TLA-lok), god of rain, and the other to Huitzilopochtli (Wee-tsee-lo-POCH-tee), god of war and the sun. Higher than a modern-day 13-story building, the Templo Mayor was the tallest building in Tenochtitlan. It could be seen from all corners of the city.

Inside the temple, Aztecs buried precious objects as offerings to their gods. Some of the objects were made by the Aztecs. Many were tribute items from the far regions of the empire. Other items were antiques from people who lived in the Valley of Mexico before the Aztecs.

Below are drawings of three items found buried in the Templo Mayor. The mask was an antique, more than 1,000 years old when buried by the Aztecs. It was made of the precious stone jade. The hummingbird ear ornaments were made from gold and were probably a tribute item. The statue was made by Aztec stoneworkers. It was found in the shrine on the Tlaloc side of the temple.



Jade Mask

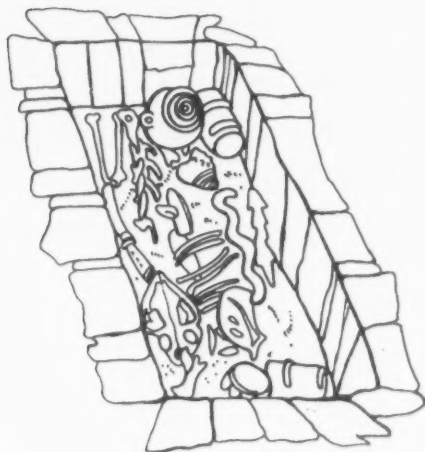


Gold Earrings



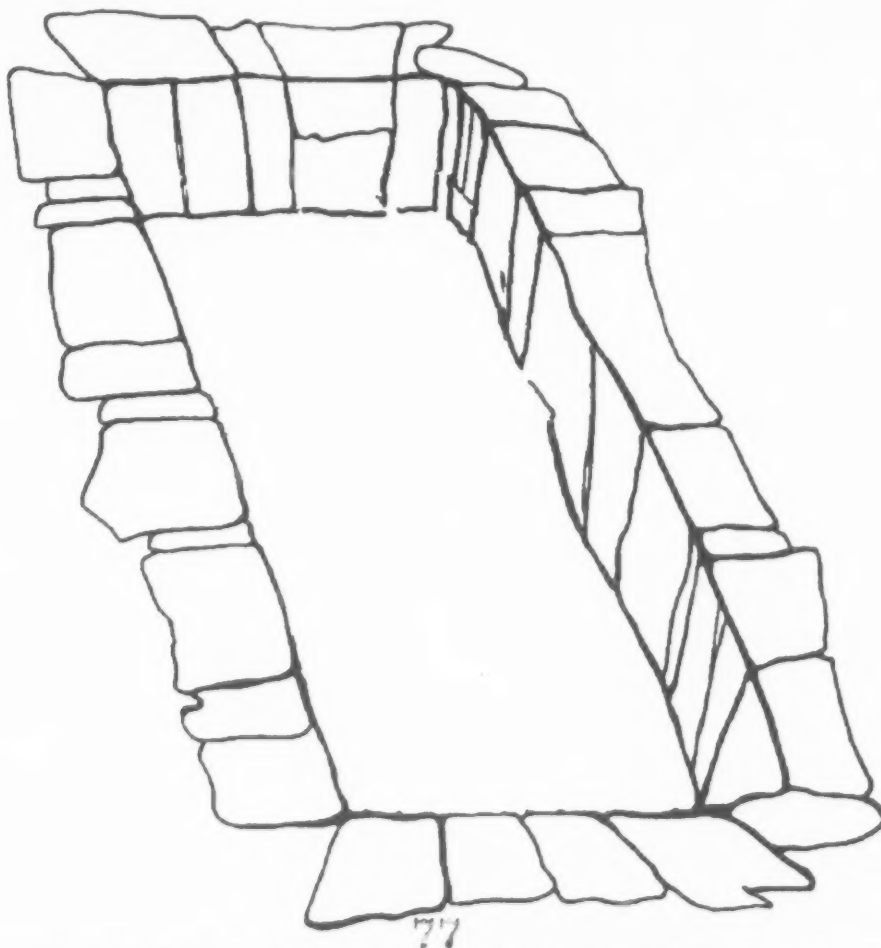
Stone Statue

Burying Offerings



Aztecs buried their offerings in the Templo Mayor very carefully. Many offerings were arranged in stone chests with stone lids. As this drawing shows, a chest contained a variety of objects, such as art treasures, jewelry, small statues of gods, small incense burners, skeletons of animals, and plant remains.

Imagine you want to bury a chest of objects important to you. What objects would you include? In the space below, make a list of those objects. Then draw pictures and label the objects in this outline of a chest.



UNEARTHING THE SPLENDORS OF THE GREAT TEMPLE:

Architecture and Art in Aztec Worship

Lesson Objective

To acquaint students with highlights of Aztec architecture and art by having them determine the dimensions of the Templo Mayor and analyze an array of precious objects buried in the temple as offerings.

Materials Needed

- Intermediate Reading pages 1 and 2, "Master Architects and Artists," 1 copy per student
- Intermediate Worksheet, "Learning from Buried Offerings," 1 copy per student
- Templo Mayor drawing, Insert (back cover pocket), 1 copy per student
- Scissors, tape, color marking pens or colored pencils, tape measure, stakes, string, old magazines or catalogs, drawing paper, glue
- Optional: "Architecture and Art of the Aztecs" 1 copy per student

Teaching Strategy

SHARING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Referring to information in "Architecture and Art of the Aztecs," share with students facts about the impressive architecture and artwork of the Aztecs. In preparation for the activities they will do in the lesson, emphasize that the sacred precinct was in the heart of Tenochtitlan, a large city that was divided into residential districts. Impress students with the importance of the archaeological discovery of the Templo Mayor as the physical, spiritual, and political heart of the Aztec world. Explain how archaeologists use findings in such sites to learn more about prehistoric

cultures. As you discuss Aztec artwork with students, have them consider the kinds of art objects we value today.

INTRODUCING AZTEC ARCHITECTURE

Distribute to students copies of the reading pages "Master Architects and Artists." Allow time for silent reading or call on volunteers to read paragraphs aloud. As they read about the Templo Mayor, emphasize that the Aztecs built all of their great buildings without the use of draft animals, mechanical devices, or the wheel. Explain that although we know much about how the Aztecs' structures looked, we do not know exactly how they created their architectural designs or how they constructed the buildings.

ESTABLISHING THE SIZE OF THE TEMPLO MAYOR

Distribute copies of the drawing of the Templo Mayor. Tell students that to get a sense of the enormous size of the Templo Mayor, they can mark off the base dimensions in an outdoor area. Take the students to the school yard or a field. Have them use a tape measure to mark off an area that is 260 feet (80m) by 260 feet (80m), the actual size of the temple's base. Post stakes at the corners, and tie string from the stakes to identify the sides.

Help students compare the area they have marked off as the base size of the Templo Mayor with the size of their school building or another large building nearby. Then explain to students that the Templo Mayor was 130 feet (40 m) high, which is about the height of a modern-day 13-story building. Have students compare that height with the height of a familiar building.

Concluding Project

Remind students that in their reading, they learned that inside the Templo Mayor, Aztecs buried objects of importance as offerings to their gods. Distribute copies of the worksheet "Learning from Buried Offerings" and read the first paragraph with students. Have them study and identify the objects arranged in the stone chest. (Items include animal bones, a musical instrument, a brazier for burning incense, small art objects.)

Read the next section of text with students, discussing the kinds of objects the Aztecs buried and why each might have been chosen as an offering. Explain to students that today we do not give material offerings such as those given by the Aztecs to their gods. However, both groups and individuals in our culture attach special value to certain objects. Read the rest of the text. On the chalkboard, create a sample chart with the headings listed and have students recreate the chart on their own paper. Emphasize that in selecting and listing the valued items they would choose to include in a chest of objects, students are to identify present-day objects.

Give students magazines or catalogs from which to cut out pictures of the objects they would choose to bury or provide them with drawing paper and color markers or pencils to draw images of the objects. When they have several pictures compiled, distribute blank sheets of paper and direct students to draw a chest, then glue their pictures inside the chest.

When their chests are completed, have students exchange their drawings with classmates. Ask students to imagine themselves as archaeolo-

gists who have just unearthed the chests. Using a separate sheet of paper, have the "archaeologists" name each object pictured and write an hypothesis about why the object was included.

Conclude by having students share the contents of the chests they received and their hypotheses about why the objects were chosen. Then ask

- What categories of objects do we value enough today to preserve? (*Accept all logical answers but expect students to identify categories, such as expensive objects, rare objects, or items of personal value.*)
- In what kinds of buildings do we store valuable items? (*Possible answers: museums, libraries, churches, banks*)
- Why do you think cultures and individuals identify and save precious objects? (*Accept all supportable answers.*)

Master Architects and Artists

In 1519, the Aztec civilization was at the height of its power. Its capital city, Tenochtitlan (Te-noch-TEET-lan), had a population of about 250,000 people and was one of the largest cities in the world at the time. Covering at least five square miles, Tenochtitlan included residential areas, much like our neighborhoods, that spread out from the city's center.

At the center of Tenochtitlan was a walled area called the sacred precinct. The precinct contained many buildings, including religious temples, a school, warriors' living quarters, and a ceremonial ball court. Bordering the area were the emperor's palace and the homes of other nobles. Buildings in the precinct were large, beautifully designed, and sparkling white with color accents.

Towering over all the other buildings in the sacred precinct was the Templo Mayor, meaning Great Temple. The temple was pyramid-shaped, with stepped sides and a flat top. On the top were two shrines. One shrine was dedicated to Tlaloc (TLA-lok), god of rain and the other to Huitzilopochtli (Wee-tsee-lo-POCH-tlee), god of war and the sun. Higher than a modern-day 13-story building, the Templo Mayor was the tallest building in Tenochtitlan. It could be seen from all corners of the city. This magnificent temple was the physical, spiritual, and political heart of the Aztec empire.

Inside the Templo Mayor, Aztecs buried precious objects as offerings to their gods. Some of the objects were made by the Aztecs, but many were tribute items paid by people from outlying regions of the empire. Other items were antiques from people who lived in the Valley of Mexico before the Aztecs.

The first Spanish to arrive in Tenochtitlan were awed by the Templo Mayor. However, after conquering the Aztecs, the Spanish partially destroyed the temple to gather materials to build their own cathedral. In time, the remains of the temple were built over until they were no longer visible.

At 9:00 A.M. on February 21, 1978, a phone call reported a major discovery. Workmen digging a trench near the center of Mexico City had discovered "the arm of a goddess." News spread rapidly throughout Mexico City. The arm belonged to a great round sculpture of the moon goddess, Coyolxauhqui (Ko-yol-sha-UH-kee). Archaeologists, scientists who study remains of past human life, guessed immediately that the workmen had discovered the site of the Aztecs' long-buried Templo Mayor.

From 1979 to 1982, archaeology teams worked to unearth the temple. They also found and identified the treasures buried within the temple. The scientists found seven structures. They learned that over many years, the Aztecs had increased the size and magnificence of their temple by building new, larger structures around and over previous structures. The new, larger stages covered smaller stages like nested Russian dolls.

In the spaces between the stages, archaeologists found thousands of objects buried by the Aztecs as offerings. Shown are drawings of three items found in the Templo Mayor.

The mask was an antique. It was made in Teotihuacan about 1,000 years before it was buried in the Templo Mayor. It was made of greenstone, a stone the Aztecs thought was more valuable than gold.

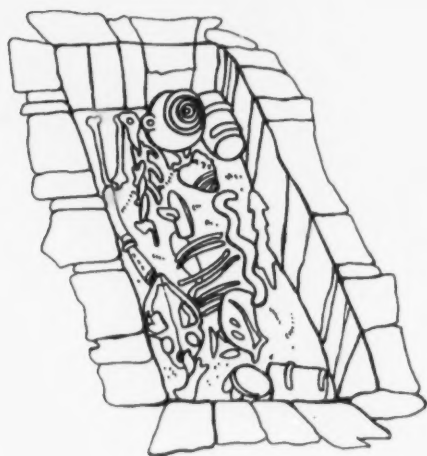


The gold hummingbird ear ornaments found in the temple are 2 1/2 inches (6.5 cm) long. Gold objects were most commonly received as tribute items from outlying regions.

The statue, called a *Chac Mool* (Chac-Mohl), was a divine go-between from Aztec priests to the god Tlaloc. It was found on the Tlaloc side of the Templo Mayor.



Learning from Buried Offerings



Between the walls of new temple constructions, Aztecs buried objects as offerings to their gods. Often these objects were arranged in stone chests with stone lids. The chests were then buried in the construction rubble. Archaeologists discovered these chests as they dug up the Templo Mayor site. Study this illustration of one such chest.

Archaeologists have found a wide range of buried offerings in Templo Mayor.

Some of the objects include

statues of gods
ceremonial knives
shells
gemstones

plant remains
cooking tools
musical instruments
pottery

human skulls
jewelry
masks
animal remains

Aztecs chose these objects for burial because they were rare, beautiful art creations, special everyday objects, or important religious or political symbols.

Imagine you wished to bury a chest of objects important to you. What objects would you choose to include? On a separate sheet of paper, create a chart with the following five headings:

Rare Objects	Art Objects	Political/ Religious Objects	Everyday Objects	Other Objects
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Under each category, list objects you would include in a burial chest. Find or draw pictures of the objects you name. Save the pictures.

UNEARTHING THE SPLENDORS OF THE GREAT TEMPLE: *Importance of Architecture and Art in Aztec Worship*

Lesson Objective

To acquaint students with highlights of Aztec architecture and art by having them recreate a model of the Templo Mayor and analyze the importance of objects recovered in archaeological excavations.

Materials Needed

- Secondary Reading pages 1 and 2 "Rediscovering Aztec Architecture and Art," 1 copy per student
- Secondary Worksheet, "Analyzing Artifacts from an Archaeological Dig," 1 copy per student
- Templo Mayor drawing, Insert (back cover pocket), 1 copy per student
- Foam board or heavy posterboard, scissors, tape or glue, blue and red color markers, tape measure, stakes
- Optional: "Architecture and Art of the Aztecs," 1 copy per student

Teaching Strategy

SHARING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Referring to information in "Architecture and Art of the Aztecs," share with students facts about the impressive architecture and artwork of the Aztecs. In preparation for the activities they will do in the lesson, emphasize that the sacred precinct was in the heart of Tenochtitlan, a large city that was divided into residential districts much like our neighborhoods. Impress students with the importance of the archaeological discovery of the Templo Mayor, meaning Great Temple, as the physical, spiritual, and political heart of the Aztec world. Explain how archaeologists use find-

ings in such sites to learn more about prehistoric cultures. As you discuss Aztec artwork with students, have them compare the kinds of art objects we value today with those valued by Aztecs.

INTRODUCING AZTEC ARCHITECTURE

Distribute to students copies of the reading page "Rediscovering Aztec Architecture and Art," and allow time for them to read the information. In a follow-up discussion, emphasize that the Aztecs built all of their great buildings without the use of draft animals, mechanical devices, or wheels. Explain that although we know much about how the Aztecs' buildings looked, we do not know exactly how they created their building designs or how they constructed the structures.

CREATING A MODEL OF TEMPLO MAYOR

Provide copies of the Templo Mayor drawing to students. Tell students that, using the drawings and dimensions provided, they are to create scale models of the Templo Mayor. Divide students into teams of four or five to create the models. Remind students that the Templo Mayor was constructed in seven stages. They will be reconstructing the seventh, largest, stage. Inform students that although the pyramid base of the temple was white, the shrines on the temple top were painted in bright colors. Tlaloc's shrine had blue and white vertical stripes; Huitzilopochtli's shrine had red walls with white stone skulls.

Distribute to the teams the necessary materials for constructing temple models: foam board or heavy posterboard, scissors, tape or glue, and color markers. Allow classtime for the construction of the models, or assign their completion as homework.

When students' models are completed, put them on display and have team members share the "fine points" of their temple construction.

To clarify the actual size of the temple for students, take them to an outdoor area and have them mark off the actual dimensions of the temple base, as provided on the drawings. Use stakes to mark the corners of the temple's base and tie string between the stakes to identify the sides. Compare the height of the temple (about 13 stories in a modern-day building) with a building familiar to students.

Concluding Project

Review the concluding paragraphs of the reading "Rediscovering Aztec Architecture and Art" with students before distributing copies of the worksheet "Analyzing Artifacts from an Archaeological Dig." Emphasize to students that while the discovery of the Templo Mayor has been important to understanding Aztec architecture, the discovery of the offerings has been equally important in learning more about the artwork and religious practices of the Aztecs.

Have students read the worksheet and clarify their task before they begin working on the assignment. (Items in the depicted offering chest include human or animal bones, a musical instrument, a brazier for burning incense, stone tools, and small art objects.) Emphasize that they are to imagine the kinds of objects excavated from the Templo Mayor, as listed on the worksheet, when they answer the five questions.

To summarize students' completed assignments, call on volunteers to share their categorizations. Point out that describing and categorizing

objects is one way scientists organize their inquiries and hypotheses. Then encourage volunteers to share their generalizations about the kinds of objects Aztecs considered appropriate offerings to their gods and their views of gods themselves. *(Accept all supportable answers: one example of a generalization about appropriate gifts might be that Aztecs believed gifts had to be rare, of great beauty, from the plant/animal world, or of practical use. An example of a generalization about the Aztecs' view of their gods is that the gods deserved or demanded some of the Aztecs' finest earthly treasures.)*

Conclude by having students discuss their impressions of archaeology as a career choice. Help them appreciate the excitement that can be generated in such work, but also the necessity for detailed, often tedious, hours of effort without immediate reward.

Rediscovering Aztec Architecture and Art

The Aztec civilization had reached the height of its power by 1519 when the first Europeans arrived. Its capital city, Tenochtitlan (Te-noch-TEET-lan), was one of the largest cities in the world at the time. With a population of about 250,000 people, it covered at least five square miles. Tenochtitlan included residential areas, much like our neighborhoods, that spread out from the city's center.

At the center of Tenochtitlan was a walled area called the sacred precinct. In the sacred precinct were many buildings, perhaps as many as 78, including religious temples, a school, warriors' living quarters, and a ceremonial ball court. Bordering the walled area were the emperor's palace and the homes of other nobility. Many buildings in the precinct were large, beautifully designed, and gleaming white with color accents.

Towering over all the other buildings in the sacred precinct was the Templo Mayor, the Great Temple. The temple was pyramid shaped but had stepped sides and a flat top.

The base of the Templo Mayor was about the size of two adjoining football fields. The temple stood taller than a modern-day, 13-story building. As the tallest structure in Tenochtitlan, it could be seen from all corners of the city. This magnificent temple was the physical, spiritual, and political heart of the Aztec empire.

Inside the Templo Mayor, Aztecs buried precious objects as offerings to their gods. Some of the objects were made by the Aztecs, but many were tribute items paid by people from outlying regions of the empire. Other items were antiques, objects the Aztecs had found and preserved from people who lived in the Valley of Mexico before them.

The first Spanish to arrive in Tenochtitlan were awed by the Templo Mayor. However, after conquering the Aztecs, the Spanish partially destroyed the temple to gather materials to build their own cathedral. In time, the remains of the temple were buried until they were no longer visible.

At 9:00 A.M. on February 21, 1978, a phone call reported a major discovery. Workmen digging a trench near the center of Mexico City had discovered "the arm of a goddess." News spread rapidly throughout the city. The arm belonged to a great round sculpture of the moon goddess,

Coyolxauhqui (Ko-yol-sha-UH-kee). Archaeologists, scientists who study remains of past human life, guessed immediately that the workmen had discovered the site of the Aztecs' long-buried Templo Mayor.

From 1979 to 1982, archaeology teams worked to unearth the temple itself and also to find and identify the treasures buried in the temple. The scientists found seven structures. They learned that, over many years, the Aztecs had increased the size and magnificence of their temple by building new, larger structures around and over previous ones. These stages of enlargement were like nested Russian dolls or boxes. Archaeologists speculate that the Aztecs continued to expand the Templo Mayor in part because floods and swampy ground required that the building be stabilized from time to time. In addition, many new Aztec emperors wished to present the gods with a larger and more magnificent temple.

In the spaces between the separate constructions, archaeologists found thousands of objects buried by the Aztecs as offerings. After carefully cleaning off the objects, scientists recorded the objects' appearance and location. They then studied the objects to learn more about the Aztec empire and culture. Some findings confirmed previous theories about the culture being studied; others disputed or cast doubts on earlier theories.



The drawings show three objects excavated from Templo Mayor offerings. The mask was an antique that was made by an artist in Teotihuacan about 1,000 years before the Aztecs buried it at the Templo Mayor. The discovery of this greenstone mask among the offerings helped scientists understand the high regard in which the Aztecs held their predecessors.

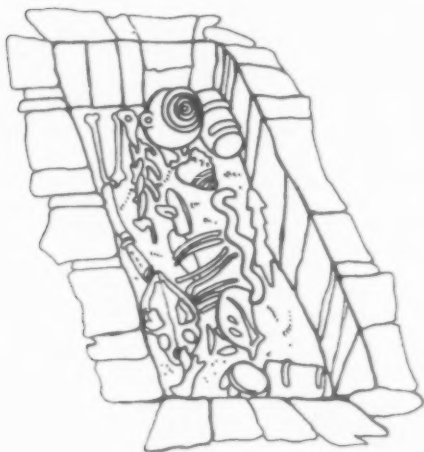


The gold hummingbird ear ornaments found in the temple are 2 1/2 inches (6.5 cm) long. Gold objects were most commonly received as tribute from Oaxaca, a part of the Aztec empire southeast of Tenochtitlan. This kind of finding confirms scientists' knowledge of the Aztec tribute system and the regions to which they had expanded their control.

Providing more information about Aztec religious beliefs and practices, the statue is thought to have been a divine intermediary between Aztec priests and the god Tlaloc. It was found on the Tlaloc side of the Templo Mayor.



Analyzing Artifacts from an Archaeological Dig



Between the walls of new Templo Mayor constructions, Aztecs buried objects as offerings to their gods. Often these objects were arranged in stone chests with stone lids. The chests were then buried in the construction rubble. Archaeologists discovered these chests as they excavated the Templo Mayor site. Study this illustration of one such chest.

Archaeologists have found a wide range of offerings buried in the Templo Mayor. Some of the unearthed objects include small statues representing gods, pottery, gemstones, masks, musical instruments, shells, jewelry, braziers, ceremonial knives, and plant and animal remains. Which of these appear in the illustration on this page?

Imagine you are an archaeologist who is studying the objects (listed above) that have been unearthed in the excavation of the Templo Mayor. On a separate sheet of paper, write a report on the objects by completing the following tasks.

1. Create a set of three to five categories by which to classify the objects listed above. For example, one category might be "Plant/Human/Animal Remains."
2. Create a chart from the categories you developed. List in the chart the objects excavated from the Templo Mayor.
3. Looking at the names of objects listed on your chart, develop one generalization about the kinds of objects Aztecs considered appropriate offerings to their gods.
4. Based on the excavated objects listed, develop a generalization about how the Aztecs viewed their gods.
5. Write a paragraph describing what the excavated objects suggest about the beliefs, lifestyles, and values of the Aztecs.

The Fall of the Aztec Empire



In 1502, 34-year-old Moctezuma Xocoyotzin (Mok-tek-ZU-ma Sho-ko-YO-tsin), or Moctezuma II, became the ruler of the great Aztec empire.

A valiant warrior and a wise counselor, Moctezuma had the reputation of being proud yet humble, deeply religious, and at times ruthless. Moctezuma ruled over an empire of 38 provinces and some 20 million people.

The emperor lived a life of sumptuous luxury in a magnificent palace surrounded by beautiful gardens, an aviary, and a zoo. He wore elaborate garments woven of the finest cotton, and ornaments of gold, precious stones, and colorful feathers. No one was allowed to look him in the face. Even great lords who wished to speak with him came into his presence barefooted and with bowed heads.

Aztec Premonitions

Legend tells us that for ten years prior to the arrival of the Spanish soldiers, the Aztec world had been plagued by a series of evil omens that foretold their coming. A large flame appeared in the sky every night for a year. The shrine to Huitzilopochtli (Wee-tsee-lo-POCH-tee) burst into flames for no apparent reason. A strange bird with a round mirror on its chest was captured and taken to Moctezuma. In the mirror, he saw people, dressed for battle, riding on the backs of deer. Monsters were captured and taken to Moctezuma, only to disappear before him.

The Aztecs and their ruler feared the meaning of these strange events.

Hernán Cortés

As the Aztecs contemplated the strange series of signs, Hernán Cortés prepared to lead

an important expedition. Born in Spain, Cortés rejected the law education his parents planned for him. In 1504, at the age of 19, he sailed to Hispaniola (now the Dominican Republic and Haiti), where he earned the reputation of a successful government official.

Joining with Diego Velázquez, Cortés took part in the Spanish conquest of Cuba in 1511. Impressed with the young conquistador, Velázquez, who became the governor of Cuba, chose Cortés to lead an expedition to the mainland of the Americas. Before Cortés could set sail, Velázquez became suspicious of the young captain's intentions and removed him from command. Cortés, however, ignored the governor's order and set sail with a large expeditionary party for the unknown land of Mexico.

At intermediate stops along his route to Mexico, Cortés had two strokes of good luck. The first was to meet a Spanish castaway who had become fluent in the Mayan language in his years of servitude on the island of Cozumel off Yucatán. Joining Cortés, Jerónimo de Aguilar served as a translator for the expedition when they were among Mayan-speaking peoples.

Cortés's second good fortune came in the form of a woman who was given as a gift to Cortés by the chief of a coastal group of Indians. Having been sold into slavery by allies of the Aztecs, the woman was fluent in both Mayan and Nahuatl, the Aztecs' language. Cortés baptized the woman Doña Marina. Traveling with Cortés, Doña Marina learned to speak Spanish. Between the translation abilities of de Aguilar and Doña Marina, Cortés was able to communicate with

most people the expedition met. Doña Marina became Cortés's most trusted adviser and mistress.

Arrival of Cortés in Mexico

On April 22, 1519, the Spanish Captain Hernán Cortés, 508 men, 11 ships, and 16 horses landed on the eastern coast of Mexico near present-day Veracruz.

Reports soon reached Moctezuma of strange winged towers floating upon the sea, and people with white skin and beards. Moctezuma was greatly troubled. He believed that the omens and reports of the Spaniards' arrival foretold the return of the god Quetzalcoatl (Ket-tsal-KO-atl), who had been driven from his homeland hundreds of years earlier, and was now coming to reclaim his throne. The emperor sent high-ranking emissaries to present Cortés and his men with elaborate, rich gifts—gifts befitting a god.

When the emissaries returned to Tenochtitlan (Te-noch-TEET-lan) and told their ruler of all the strange things they had seen, Moctezuma was struck with terror. He did not know if he should flee or stay, if the strangers were humans or gods. He feared that Quetzalcoatl had indeed returned.

Meanwhile, Cortés, with his appetite for gold heightened by the first extravagant gifts from Moctezuma, was determined to have more. On August 16, Cortés and his soldiers, 15 horses, and a group of Indian allies departed for Tenochtitlan. Along the way, the Spaniards had several dramatic confrontations with native peoples. In Tlaxcalla, they fought a series of battles that convinced the Tlaxcallans to become Spanish allies against their longtime enemies, the Aztecs. In Cholula, the

Spaniards killed as many as 3,000 Indians and looted and destroyed parts of the city.

Spies reported Cortés's every move to Moctezuma. The Aztec leader knew that a face-to-face encounter with the strangers was unavoidable.

Moctezuma Meets Cortés

On November 8, 1519, Moctezuma and Hernán Cortés met on a causeway leading to Tenochtitlan. This fateful encounter proved to be one of the most dramatic in history.

Tens of thousands of Aztecs watched from rooftops and canoes as the Spanish approached with their large, salivating dogs and sweating, stamping horses. Cortés was accompanied by Doña Marina, who translated for Cortés and Moctezuma. Moctezuma and his magnificent entourage approached and offered gifts of flowers and gold to the strangers. Cortés offered Moctezuma a necklace of glass beads, which he hung around the ruler's neck. Moctezuma welcomed Cortés as the returning god Quetzalcoatl.

Cortés Takes Moctezuma Hostage

Moctezuma housed Cortés and his men in the luxurious palace of his father and gave them food. He took them to the house where the city's treasure was stored. The Spanish took beautiful gold ornaments and melted them into bars for shipment to Spain. The ruler soon recognized the Spaniards' greed for gold and their plan to conquer his people and lands.

Moctezuma personally guided Cortés and his men on a tour of the magnificent city. The Spaniards were impressed by Aztec wealth, but appalled by their practice of human sacrifice.

Cortés eventually took Moctezuma hostage. Guided by religious zeal, Cortés ordered that all temples be washed clean of the blood of human sacrifice, and all idols be destroyed and replaced with images of “Our Lady” and other Catholic saints.

Sometime later, Cortés heard reports of the arrival of new Spanish troops at Veracruz. Uncertain about his own future, he returned to Veracruz, leaving about 120 troops behind in Tenochtitlan.

Aztec Warriors Defend Their City

Thirteen days after Cortés departed from Tenochtitlan, the Aztecs held a festival in honor of Huitzilopochtli. Several nights of dancing in the sacred precinct made the Spanish soldiers uneasy. They surrounded the dancers, trapping and killing them within the sacred plaza.

The citizens of Tenochtitlan were outraged by the massacre. They forced the Spanish to seek refuge in the palace, holding them under siege for 32 days. Cortés eventually returned to Tenochtitlan and found the city strangely quiet. Aztec warriors waited to ambush the returning Spaniards.

After six days of deadly fighting, the Spaniards and their Indian allies attempted to escape from Tenochtitlan at night. Aztec warriors fought to avenge the massacre in the sacred precinct. Spanish casualties were so enormous that the battle became known as the Night of Sorrows—*la Noche Triste*. The date was July 10, 1520.

Moctezuma died during the battle, although we do not know if he was killed by Spanish soldiers, Aztec enemies, or Aztec warriors. He was succeeded by his brother, Cuitlahuac (Kwee-TLA-wak).

After the Spanish Leave

After forcing the Spanish from Tenochtitlan, the Aztecs did not press their military advantage to defeat their enemy. A plague of smallpox, introduced by the Spanish, swept the city, killing many thousands of people—including the new ruler, Cuitlahuac. He was succeeded by his cousin Cuauhtemoc (Kwa-uh-TE-mok), the last Aztec ruler.

Knowing an eventual fight to the death would take place with the Spanish, Cuauhtemoc attempted to strengthen and unify his allies. He ordered great supplies of food, water, and weapons brought into Tenochtitlan.

The surviving Spanish soldiers and their allies, meanwhile, retreated to Tlaxcalla where they rested, recuperated, and formed further alliances with Indians from surrounding areas. Anticipating another assault on Tenochtitlan, Cortés's men built 13 small ships to aid in seizing the Aztec city in the lake.

The Spanish Return

On May 31, 1521, Cortés began his formal attack on Tenochtitlan. With reinforcements, he had an army of 900 Spanish soldiers, thousands of Indian allies, 86 horses, and 15 cannons. The 13 newly built ships were carried over the mountains and loaded with cannons. The Spanish sailed to the city's edge, but were hindered by large wooden spikes sunk into the lake by the Aztecs. Foot soldiers stormed the causeways, where hand-to-hand combat was fierce. The Aztecs' defense was desperate. Cuauhtemoc refused to surrender to the Spanish.

The Aztecs sacrificed 53 Spanish captives in honor of their god of war, Huitzilopochtli. Skulls

of the slain prisoners and their horses were displayed on skull racks within the sacred precinct.

Beginning on May 31, Cortés blockaded the city, keeping food and fresh water from the residents. Many people died of hunger.

On August 13, 1521, 75 days after the blockade began, the city of Tenochtitlan fell. The last desperate battle was fought in the Aztecs' great market at Tlatelolco. The streets were lined with bodies of the dead and wounded. Survivors attempted to flee. Entire areas of the city were burned and demolished, leaving only piles of rubble behind. Temples were looted and destroyed. Of the approximately 300,000 Aztec defenders of Tenochtitlan, only about 60,000 survived. The valiant Cuauhtemoc, still a hero to Mexicans, was eventually hanged by Cortés.

After the Fall

In less than two years after the arrival of Cortés, the mighty Aztec capital of Tenochtitlan was destroyed. Within ten years, most of Mexico—or New Spain as it was called by the Spanish—was under Spanish control.

Many factors contributed to the fall of Tenochtitlan. The Spaniards had superior metal armor and weapons, including guns and cannons. The Aztecs wore quilted cotton armor and fought with bows and arrows and obsidian-tipped clubs and spears. The Spaniards also had horses, thousands of Indian allies, and the assistance of Doña Marina, an able translator and one familiar with Aztec culture. Above all, the Aztec population had no immunity to European diseases such as smallpox, transmitted by the Spaniards. The Aztecs were decimated by these diseases.

The mighty Aztec empire came to an end, but through the mestizo population that emerged from that defeat, the legacies of the Aztecs live on nearly 500 years later. These legacies are discernible throughout the former lands of the Aztecs.

Remnants of the Aztec Nahuatl language can be heard daily in the Spanish spoken throughout Mexico. Many Mexican villagers still speak Nahuatl. Derivatives of some Nahuatl words, for example *tomato* and *chile*, have entered many languages.

Aztec legacies can be seen in the preparation methods and foods common in Mexico today. Corn, beans, and squash are still major foods in Mexican diets. Tortillas and tamales continue to be favorite dishes.

Beautifully woven cloth is still produced on the backstrap looms of Mexican women. Although actual examples of woven cloth from the sixteenth century are rare, anthropologists can learn much about Aztec weaving by watching Aztec descendants work and by listening to them describe their techniques.

Just as the first Spanish conquistadores were amazed at the huge, diverse Aztec markets, visitors to Mexico today marvel at the rich, orderly displays in Mexican markets. In the tradition of their ancestors, present-day shoppers still socialize in the markets.

Finally, the Aztec religious legacy can still be detected in the worship practices of present-day descendants. Despite the efforts of Spanish friars to convert Aztecs to Christianity, it is now evident that subsequent generations of Aztecs followed the tradition of their ancestors by integrating the

religion of their conquerors with their traditional gods. This practice is evident in some Indian villages today where worshippers link Aztec gods to Catholic saints. For example, the Virgin of Guadalupe blends beliefs about the Aztec mother goddess Tonantzin (Ton-ANTZ-in) and the Virgin Mary worshipped in the Catholic church.

As archaeologists, anthropologists, historians, and linguists study artifacts and documents of the Empire of the Fifth Sun, the impact and glory of this once-great civilization continues to amaze us as we look back on the Aztecs' extraordinary achievements.

RECREATING THE ENCOUNTER OF TWO CULTURES:

*Moctezuma and Hernán Cortés Meet***Lesson Objective**

To promote students' understanding of the cultural significance of the first encounter between the Aztecs and the Spanish by having them write journal accounts of the event from the perspectives of Cortés and Moctezuma and by sharing their accounts with classmates.

Materials Needed

- Elementary Reading, "The Meeting of Moctezuma II and Hernán Cortés," 1 copy per student
- Elementary Worksheet, "Writing a Journal Account," 1 copy per student

Teaching StrategyINTRODUCING THE STORY OF
A CULTURAL ENCOUNTER

Note: Because the students' reading pages for this chapter provide a brief overview of the events leading up to and the meeting between Moctezuma and Hernán Cortés, you will probably find it more effective to have them read the pages before you share additional background information.

Remind students that they have learned about the growth and many accomplishments of the Aztec empire. Ask if anyone can tell the class about the Aztec nation today. Give them a chance to express their opinions. Explain that in today's lesson, the class will learn the history of the Aztec empire since the year 1519.

Distribute copies of the reading pages "The Meeting of Moctezuma II and Hernán Cortés." Have various students read the paragraphs aloud, stopping to discuss important details.

To enrich students' knowledge about the events leading up to the meeting of the two leaders,

verbally share details from the first four sections of "The Fall of the Aztec Empire."

WRITING JOURNAL ACCOUNTS
OF THE ENCOUNTER

Tell students that the best images we have of the meeting between Moctezuma and Cortés come from codex drawings. Pass out copies of the worksheet "Writing a Journal Account." Call students' attention to the drawing, explaining that it is adapted from the *Codex Durán*. Read the two sentences below the drawing. Ask students to comment on the clothing styles of the two groups of people. Explain that the garments worn by Cortés were popular in Spain at the time. His jacket and short pants were probably made of wool, and he probably wore full-length stockings. The garments of his soldiers were wool and metal, including the metal hats. Remind students that until Moctezuma met Cortés's expedition, he had not seen horses or guns.

Review the directions in the last paragraph with students. Divide students into two groups, assigning students in one group to imagine themselves as Moctezuma and students in the other to imagine themselves as Cortés. Tell them that although Moctezuma would not have written down his description of the meeting, he probably would have created a verbal story. Explain that students who are to imagine themselves as Moctezuma should write the story as they think Moctezuma would have told it. Continue by pointing out that Cortés did write his impressions of his expedition in journal accounts.

Allow time for students to finish writing their journal entry in class, or assign the writing task as homework.

Concluding Project

When students' journal accounts are complete, divide the class into pairs. Each pair should have one student who wrote a Cortés journal entry and one who wrote a Moctezuma entry. Working in pairs, have the students verbally share with each other their journal entries. For additional exchange after the first round of presentations, have students pair up with new partners and share their accounts a second time.

Reconvene the class, and encourage students to expand on their thoughts about the meeting of the two cultures by asking questions such as

- What first thoughts do you suppose each group of people had as they observed the dress of the new people they were meeting? (*Accept all supportable answers, but help students consider that the Aztecs probably thought the Spaniards dressed too warmly for the climate and the Spanish probably thought the Aztecs dressed "immodestly."*)
- Ask what assumptions the Spanish may have made upon seeing the jewelry and offerings of the Aztecs. (*Answers should include the assumption that Aztecs were a wealthy empire.*)
- Ask what assumptions the Spanish may have made upon seeing that the Aztecs had neither horses or guns. (*Accept supportable answers, but help the students determine that the Spanish probably thought they had some military advantages over the Aztecs.*)
- What assumptions did the Aztecs make about the Spanish horses and guns?

(*Supportable answers could include the position that the Aztecs did not make assumptions about these Spanish possessions because they did not yet know their usefulness in military battle.*)

SHARING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

Tell students that they have now learned the story of the Aztec empire up to the time at which the Aztecs encountered the Spanish in Tenochtitlan. Ask them to speculate on what events they think happened after the first meeting between Cortés and Moctezuma.

To complete students' knowledge of the remaining Aztec history, share with them the final four sections of "The Fall of the Aztec Empire." Conclude by reading or explaining the following post-fall information:

In fewer than ten years after Cortés's arrival, the whole Aztec empire was controlled by the Spanish and renamed New Spain. Spanish guns, horses, Indian allies, and military strategies all played a role in defeating the Aztecs. Yet, no factor was more important in the Aztec defeat than smallpox. For years after, new plagues of smallpox and other European diseases continued to wipe out thousands of Aztecs, as well as other groups of native people in the Americas.

As more Spanish and other European settlers arrived in the former lands of the Aztecs, many intermarried with the surviving Aztecs. Out of the intermixing of Aztecs and Europeans came a new population of people called mestizos. In the mestizo population today, traditions and memories of the once-proud Aztec empire are still alive.

The Meeting of Moctezuma II and Hernán Cortés

On a November day nearly 500 years ago, two men and their soldiers met on a road. The meeting was one of the most dramatic in all the world's history. In only two years after the meeting, the land and culture of one man would be destroyed. The other man would open the way for thousands of his countrymen and women to take over the land and people of a once-proud empire.

One man in the famous meeting of 1519 was Moctezuma II (Mok-tek-ZU-ma), emperor of the Aztecs. For 17 years, Moctezuma had successfully ruled and increased the size of the Aztec empire. Yet, for 10 years, Moctezuma had been worried by strange happenings, signs that foretold future trouble in his empire.

The other man in the historic meeting was Hernán Cortés. Born in Spain, Cortés had come to the Americas as a young man. He helped other Spanish conquerors establish settlements on islands in the Caribbean Sea. As a reward for his work, Cortés was given men and supplies for an expedition to the mainland of the Americas. On the mainland, Cortés hoped to find gold and other precious materials. He also wanted to convert native people to Christianity and become a hero in Spain.

Cortés set sail from the present-day island of Cuba on his journey to Mexico. On one stop along the way, he met a young woman called Doña Marina. She had been born into a group of Indians who were allies of the Aztecs. However, she was later sold into slavery. She could speak both the Aztec language and the Mayan language of another Indian group in Mexico. She soon learned to speak Spanish as well. Doña Marina was able to help Cortés communicate with many of the Indian groups he met in Mexico.

When Cortés landed on the eastern coast of Mexico, he had 508 men, 11 ships, and 16 horses. News of his arrival spread quickly from Indian groups along the coast to Moctezuma in Tenochtitlan (Te-noch-TEET-lan), some 250 miles away. The reports Moctezuma heard told of strange people with white skin and hairy faces. They were said to travel on large animals and carry exploding weapons (guns).

From the reports, Moctezuma concluded that the leader of the strangers was one of the Aztec gods, Quetzalcoatl (Ket-tsal-KO-atl). Aztec legends had predicted that Quetzalcoatl would one day return to his home,

Tenochtitlan. Moctezuma believed Quetzalcoatl's return fulfilled the omens he had been given.

To please the returning god, Moctezuma sent messengers loaded with valuable gifts. He hoped Quetzalcoatl would accept the gifts and leave again. However, the gifts sent by Moctezuma did not persuade Cortés to leave. Instead the gifts, especially those made of gold, increased Cortés's desire to find the source of such wealth. Leading his party, Cortés marched toward Tenochtitlan. As he went, he convinced some Indian groups who were enemies of the Aztecs to join him.

On November 8, 1519, Cortés's expedition arrived on the outskirts of Tenochtitlan. Moctezuma and some of his best warriors met the strangers on one of the causeways leading into the city. Dressed in his finest woven cotton cape and wearing a colorful headdress, the handsome Moctezuma must have impressed Cortés. Similarly, Moctezuma must have looked in wonder on Cortés, mounted on his horse and wearing heavy, full-body clothing.

With thousands of Aztecs watching from rooftops and canoes, Moctezuma's men offered Cortés flowers and gold. Cortés stepped down from his horse and bowed to Moctezuma. Moctezuma returned the bow. Cortés hung a necklace around Moctezuma's neck. However when Cortés tried to embrace Moctezuma, Aztec men pulled the Spaniard away. In the Aztec culture, no one was allowed to touch the emperor.

Still believing Cortés to be a returning god, Moctezuma humbly greeted the Spanish leader. The emperor told Cortés that he had been keeping and guarding Tenochtitlan for him. Then he offered to let Cortés and some of his men stay in one of the royal palaces. Cortés accepted Moctezuma's offer. All the conversation between the two men was translated by Doña Marina, who by then had become Cortés's most trusted ally.

Writing a Journal Account



The drawing above is adapted from an Aztec codex. It shows the first meeting between the Aztecs and the Spaniards. Moctezuma II is on the right. Hernán Cortés is on the left.

Imagine that you were Moctezuma or Cortés at this famous meeting. Write a description of the day as you think Moctezuma or Cortés might have recorded it in his journal after the meeting. In your description, give details of the meeting—when and where it occurred, how the people were dressed, what gifts and words were exchanged. Also include your impression of the other man and his followers at the meeting. Conclude by describing your plans for the future.

RECREATING THE ENCOUNTER OF TWO CULTURES: *The Meeting of Aztecs and Spaniards*

Lesson Objective

To promote students' understanding of the cultural significance of the first encounter between the Aztecs and the Spanish by having them write a newspaper eyewitness account of the meeting, then teaming up with classmates to present overall impressions of the cultural encounter.

Materials Needed

- Intermediate Reading pages 1, 2, and 3 "The Meeting of Two Cultures," 1 copy per student
- Intermediate Worksheet, "Writing an Eyewitness Account," 1 copy per student
- Optional: "The Fall of the Aztec Empire," 1 copy per student

Teaching Strategy

INTRODUCING THE ENCOUNTER

Note: Because the students' reading pages for this chapter provide a brief overview of the events leading up to and following the encounter of Aztecs and Spaniards, you will probably find it more effective to have students complete the reading pages before sharing the background information with them.

Remind students that they have learned about the growth and many accomplishments of the Aztec empire. Ask volunteers to share information they know about the Aztec empire after the arrival of Europeans into Mexico. Ask students to describe the status of the Aztec empire today.

Distribute copies of the reading pages "The Meeting of Two Cultures." Have students read the information silently or aloud. When finished, discuss the reading to clarify details and to allow stu-

dents the opportunity to express their feelings about the events described.

To enrich students' knowledge about the period from 1519 to 1521, you may wish to verbally share or have students read "The Fall of the Aztec Empire" from the beginning to the last section.

WRITING AN EYEWITNESS NEWSPAPER ACCOUNT

Distribute copies of the worksheet "Writing an Eyewitness Account," and call students' attention to the drawing. Explain that the illustration is adapted from the *Codex Durán* and is one of the most authentic images we have of the meeting between Moctezuma and Cortés. Ask students to comment on the clothing styles of the two groups of people. Explain that the garments worn by Cortés were popular in Spain at the time. His jacket and short pants were probably made of wool, and he probably wore full-length stockings. The garments of his soldiers were wool and metal, including the metal hats. Remind students that until Moctezuma met Cortés's expedition, he had not previously seen horses or guns.

Review the directions in the last paragraph with students. Clarify that although this assignment is fictitious, students are to practice the basic rules of newspaper writing in answering the questions of who, what, when, where, and why. However, emphasize that students' accounts should also include their perceptions of what the two leaders were thinking about each other and what strategies they may have been planning to accomplish their goals after the meeting. Remind the class that their articles should have headlines,

datelines, and bylines. Allow time for students to finish their writing task in class, or assign it as homework.

SHARING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

To complete students' understanding of Aztec history, have them read or verbally share with them the last section of "The Fall of the Aztec Empire." Clarify that a combination of Spanish guns, horses, military strategies, and Indian allies helped to defeat the Aztecs. But perhaps the most important factor in the defeat was smallpox—a disease against which Aztecs were helpless. Emphasize that characteristics of the once-proud Aztec empire live on in the mestizo population that emerged from the intermixing of European and Aztec descendants.

Concluding Project

Point out to students that the story of the Aztecs and the Spanish is a story of a cultural encounter. It is a dramatic story, and one about which historians have mixed opinions. Some contend that the Spanish, acting within the norms of their time, had a right to conquer the Aztec empire. Others believe that no group of people has the right to overtake and destroy the culture of another.

Divide students into small groups of four or five students. Ask each group to discuss their views on the outcome of the Aztec/Spanish encounter. Then challenge them to prepare a presentation of their view or views for the rest of the class. They may choose to make their presentation in the form of an art project, a song, a poem, a dramatization, or another format of their creation. Set a completion date.

Provide class time for groups to make their presentations. When all have finished, conclude by asking these questions:

- Should explorers or other people who encounter people from unfamiliar cultures follow a code of conduct in their interactions with the strangers? If so, what might such a code include? (*Accept supportable answers, but lead students in considering the issue of territorial and heritage rights versus military might.*)
- What lesson from the history of the Aztec/Spanish encounter can we apply in our personal meetings with people of different cultures? (*Accept supportable answers, but lead students in thinking about how premature judgments and assumptions need to be withheld in such situations.*)

The Meeting of Two Cultures

In 1519, one of the most dramatic meetings of two great cultures in world history took place. Within two years after the meeting, one culture was all but destroyed. Members of the other culture had taken control and started changes that would forever affect the land and people they defeated.

The leader of one culture, the Aztecs, was Moctezuma II (Mok-tek-ZU-ma). Moctezuma had ruled over the Aztecs for 17 years. Under his leadership, the empire's lands and wealth had greatly increased. Moctezuma was a handsome man who lived a life of luxury in his Tenochtitlan (Te-noch-TEET-lan) palace. Yet, for 10 years he had been worried by strange omens that foretold trouble.

The leader of the other culture was Hernán Cortés, a Spanish explorer and soldier. Born in Spain, Cortés had come to the Americas as a young man and helped the Spanish settle islands in the Caribbean Sea. In 1519, Cortés was provided men and supplies to lead an expedition to the mainland of the Americas. On the mainland, Cortés hoped to find gold or other precious metals, convert native people to Christianity, and become a hero in Spain.

On his way to Mexico, Cortés had the good fortune to be given a young woman he called Doña Marina. Although Doña Marina was originally from a group of Indians who were Aztec allies, she had been sold into slavery. Doña Marina could speak both Nahuatl (the language of the Aztecs) and Mayan, the language of another Indian group. With Cortés, she also learned Spanish. This allowed her to help Cortés communicate with many of the Indian groups he met.

When Cortés landed on the eastern coast of Mexico, he had 508 men, 11 ships, and 16 horses. Word of his arrival spread quickly from Indian groups along the coast to Moctezuma in Tenochtitlan nearly 250 miles away. The reports told of strange people with white skin and hairy faces who traveled on large animals and carried exploding weapons (guns). Hearing the reports, Moctezuma concluded that the leader of the strangers was one of the Aztec gods, Quetzalcoatl (Ket-tsal-KO-atl), who legend predicted would one day return to Tenochtitlan. Moctezuma believed this was the fulfillment of the omens he had been given over the years. To please the returning god, he sent messengers loaded with valuable gifts. He hoped the stranger would accept the gifts and leave the empire.

The gifts sent by Moctezuma only increased Cortés's desire to find the source of such wealth. He and his expedition marched on toward Tenochtitlan. As he went, he convinced some Indian groups, enemies of the Aztecs, to join with him.

On November 8, 1519, Cortés arrived in Tenochtitlan. Moctezuma and some of his best warriors met Cortés and his party on a causeway leading into the city. With thousands of Aztecs watching from rooftops and canoes, Moctezuma's men offered Cortés flowers and gold. Cortés stepped down from his horse and bowed to Moctezuma. Moctezuma returned the bow. Cortés hung a necklace around Moctezuma's neck. When Cortés tried to embrace Moctezuma, Aztec men pulled Cortés away. No one was allowed to touch the emperor.

Believing Cortés to be the returning god Quetzalcoatl, Moctezuma greeted the Spanish leader by telling him that he had been keeping and guarding Tenochtitlan for him. Then he offered Cortés and some of his men housing in his father's palace. Cortés accepted. All their conversations were translated by Doña Marina, by then Cortés's most trusted ally.

In coming days, Moctezuma personally guided Cortés on a tour of Tenochtitlan. Although impressed with the grandness of the city, Cortés and his men set about immediately to accomplish their goals. They took beautiful gold Aztec ornaments and melted them into bars to send back to Spain. Then they ordered all temples to be washed clean of human blood and all idols of Aztec gods to be destroyed. The Aztecs soon recognized that the Spanish had not come in peace.

Hearing reports that more Spanish troops had landed on the coast, Cortés left Tenochtitlan to meet them. However, he left behind 120 of his soldiers. While Cortés was away, the remaining troops became concerned that the Aztecs had plans to kill them. During a festival, the Spanish soldiers trapped and killed some of the Aztec dancers. Angered, Tenochtitlan warriors held the Spanish soldiers captive and waited to ambush Cortés.

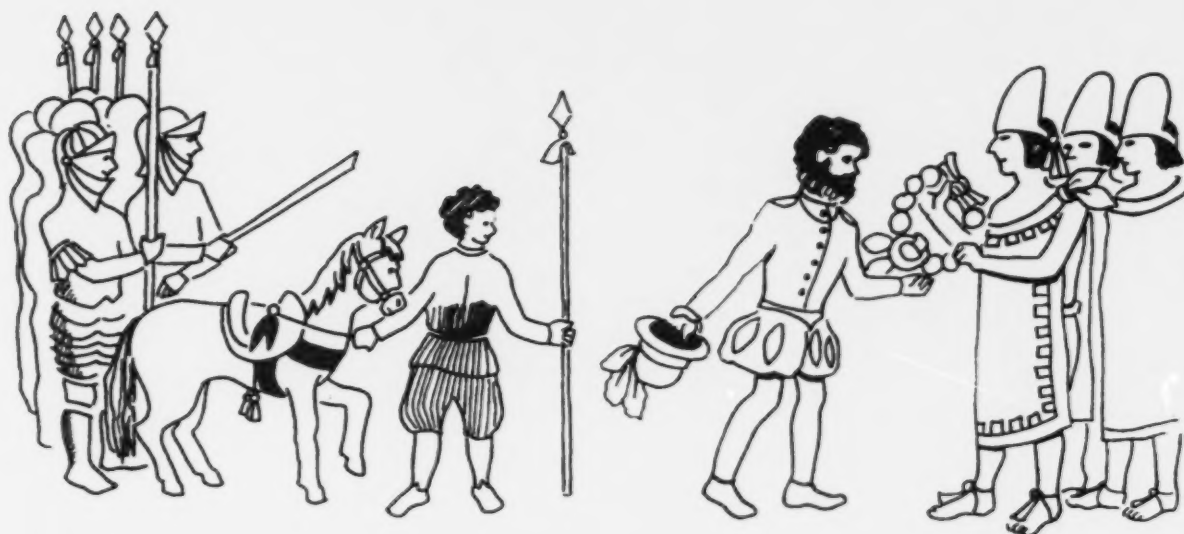
In the battle that took place after Cortés's return, the Aztecs forced the Spanish and their Indian allies to take shelter in a nearby city controlled by Aztec enemies. During the battle, both sides suffered many deaths, and Moctezuma was killed. His brother, Cuitlahuac (Kwee-TLA-wak), became emperor.

After the battle, the Aztecs did not attempt to track down and kill their Spanish enemies because they were confronted with an even more deadly enemy in their own city. That enemy was smallpox, a contagious disease, introduced by the Spanish into the Aztec population. Smallpox was a disease unknown to the Aztecs, and they had no immunity to it. The disease swept through the city, killing thousands of people—including their new emperor. A cousin of Moctezuma, Cuauhtemoc (Kwa-uh-TE-mok), became the next, and last, Aztec emperor.

Cuauhtemoc tried to rally the Aztec warriors and rebuild the city's supplies of food, water, and weapons for another battle. On May 31, 1521, Cortés and his troops returned to attack Tenochtitlan. Armed with horses, cannons, and newly-built small ships, they surrounded the lake city. Then they cut off food and water supplies.

For 75 days, the Aztecs fought with all the strength they could gather. But the toll of disease and lack of supplies finally caused the brave Aztecs to surrender. Streets were lined with bodies of the dead and wounded. Large areas of Tenochtitlan were burned and destroyed. Temples were looted. Eventually, Cuauhtemoc was hanged. Of the approximately 300,000 Aztec defenders of Tenochtitlan, only about 60,000 survived. Ten years after Cortés's arrival, all the Aztec empire was controlled by the Spanish and renamed New Spain.

Writing an Eyewitness Account



The drawing above is adapted from an Aztec codex. It shows the first meeting between the Aztecs, led by Moctezuma II, and the Spanish, led by Hernán Cortés. The meeting took place on November 8, 1519, on a causeway leading into Tenochtitlan.

Imagine you were a newspaper reporter covering the meeting of Moctezuma and Cortés. On another sheet of paper, write an eyewitness report of the meeting. Be sure to describe what happened, who was involved, when it took place, and where it occurred. Describe what you imagine the leaders and their followers thought of each other. Then tell what you think each leader was planning for the future of himself and his people.

RECREATING THE ENCOUNTER OF TWO CULTURES: *The Meeting of Aztecs and Spanish*

Lesson Objective

To promote students' understanding of the cultural significance of the first meeting between the Aztecs and the Spanish by having them write an imaginary interview with Moctezuma II or Hernán Cortés, then teaming up with classmates to present overall impressions of the encounter.

Materials Needed

- Secondary Reading pages 1, 2, and 3, "Encounter: The Aztecs and Spanish Meet," 1 copy per student
- Secondary Worksheet, "Interviewing a Participant in the Encounter," 1 copy per student
- Example of an interview format in a current magazine
- Optional: "The Fall of the Aztec Empire," 1 copy per student

Teaching Strategy

INTRODUCING THE ENCOUNTER

Note: Because the students' reading pages for this chapter provide a brief overview of the events leading up to and following the encounter of Aztecs and Spaniards, you will probably find it more effective to have students complete the reading pages before sharing the background information.

Remind students that they have learned about the growth and many accomplishments of the Aztec empire. Ask volunteers to share information about the Aztec empire after the arrival of Europeans into Mexico. Challenge students to describe the status of the Aztec empire today.

Distribute copies of the reading pages "Encounter: The Aztecs and Spanish Meet" and have students read the information. When they are finished, discuss the reading to clarify details and to allow students time to express their feelings about the events described.

To enrich students' knowledge about the period from 1519 to 1521, you may wish to share verbally or have students read "The Fall of the Aztec Empire" from the beginning to the last section.

INTERVIEWING A PARTICIPANT IN THE ENCOUNTER

Distribute copies of the worksheet "Interviewing a Participant in the Encounter," and call students' attention to the drawing. Explain that the illustration is adapted from the *Codex Durán* and is one of the most authentic images we have of the meeting between Moctezuma and Cortés. Ask students to comment on the clothing styles of the Aztecs and the Spanish. Explain that the garments worn by Cortés were popular in Spain at the time. His jacket and short pants were probably made of wool, and he probably wore full-length stockings. The garments of his soldiers were wool and metal, including the metal hats. Remind students that until Moctezuma met Cortés, the Aztec emperor had not seen horses or guns.

Review the directions in the last paragraph with students. Make certain students are familiar with the format of magazine interview reporting. Show students the example of the magazine interview you brought to class. Point out the way in which questions are highlighted and the interviewee's responses printed after the questions.

Divide the class into two groups and assign one group to interview (fictitiously) Moctezuma and the second group to interview Cortés. Clarify that students are to create both the questions they would ask as the interviewer and the responses they believe Moctezuma or Cortés would give as the interviewee. Encourage them to refer to library resources to learn more about their interviewee. Allow classtime for students to complete their written interviews, or assign the task as homework.

When students have completed the assignment, divide the class into pairs, with one partner having written a Moctezuma interview and the other a Cortés interview. Direct the pairs to share their interviews, then summarize what they believe to be the major differences and similarities in the goals, fears, and feelings of Moctezuma and Cortés.

SHARING BACKGROUND INFORMATION

To enrich students' understanding of the Aztec history since the encounter, have them read or verbally share with them the last section of "The Fall of the Aztec Empire."

Concluding Project

Point out to students that the story of the Aztecs and the Spanish is a story of cultural encounter. It is a dramatic story, and one about which historians have mixed opinions. Some contend that the Spanish, acting within the norms of their time, had a right to conquer the Aztec empire. Others believe that no culture has the right to destroy another culture.

Divide students into small groups of four or five students. Ask each group to discuss their views on the outcome of the Aztec/Spanish

encounter. Then challenge them to prepare a presentation of their view or views for the rest of the class. They may choose to make their presentation in the form of an art project, a song, a poem, a dramatization, or another format of their creation. Set a completion date.

Provide classtime for groups to make their presentations. When all have finished, conclude by asking these questions:

- Should explorers or other people who encounter unfamiliar cultures follow a code of conduct in their interactions with the strangers? If so, what might such a code include? *(Accept supportable answers, but lead students in considering the question of territorial and heritage rights versus military might.)*
- What lesson from the history of the Aztec/Spanish encounter can we apply in our personal meetings with people of different cultures? *(Accept supportable answers but lead students in thinking about how premature judgments and assumptions need to be withheld in such situations.)*

Encounter: The Aztecs and Spanish Meet

What happens when two great cultures, previously unknown to each other, meet? One answer to this question was provided in the aftermath of a meeting that occurred in 1519. Today, we know that this meeting was one of the most dramatic encounters between cultures in all the world's history.

At the encounter, the leader of the Aztec culture was Moctezuma II (Mok-tek-ZU-ma). Moctezuma had ruled over the Aztecs for 17 years. Under his leadership, the empire's lands and wealth had greatly increased. Moctezuma, a handsome man, lived a life of luxury in his Tenochtitlan (Te-noch-TEET-lan) palace. Yet, for 10 years he had been concerned by strange omens that seemed to foretell future trouble.

The other culture's leader was Hernán Cortés, a Spanish explorer and soldier. Born in Spain, Cortés had come to the Americas as a young man and helped the Spanish settle islands in the Caribbean Sea. In 1519, Cortés was appointed leader and provided men and supplies for an expedition to the mainland of the Americas. There, Cortés hoped to find gold or other precious metals, convert native people to Christianity, and become a hero back home in Spain.

During a stop on his way to Mexico, Cortés was presented a young woman he called Doña Marina as a gift from an Indian leader. Although Doña Marina was originally from a group of Indians who were Aztec allies, she had been sold into slavery. Doña Marina could speak both Nahuatl (the language of the Aztecs) and Mayan, the language of another Indian group in Mexico. Traveling with Cortés, she also learned Spanish. Her knowledge of languages allowed Doña Marina to translate between Cortés and many of the Indian groups he met in Mexico.

When Cortés landed on the eastern coast of Mexico, he had 508 men, 11 ships, and 16 horses. Word of his arrival spread quickly from Indian groups along the coast to Moctezuma some 250 miles away in Tenochtitlan. The reports told of strange people with white skin and hair on their faces who traveled on large animals and carried exploding weapons (guns). Hearing the reports, Moctezuma concluded that the leader of the strangers was one of the Aztec gods, Quetzalcoatl (Ket-tsal-KO-atl), who legend predicted would one day return to Tenochtitlan. Moctezuma believed this return was the fulfillment of the omens he had witnessed over the years. To please the returning god, he sent messengers loaded with valuable gifts. Moctezuma hoped the stranger would accept the gifts and leave the empire.

Moctezuma's gifts only increased Cortés's desire to find the source of such wealth. He marched on with his expedition toward Tenochtitlan. As he went, he convinced some Indian groups, enemies of the Aztecs, to join with him.

Cortés arrived in Tenochtitlan on November 8, 1519. Moctezuma and some of his best warriors met Cortés and his expedition on a causeway leading into the city. With thousands of Aztecs watching from rooftops and canoes, Moctezuma's men offered Cortés flowers and gold. Cortés stepped down from his horse and bowed to Moctezuma. Moctezuma returned the bow. Cortés hung a necklace around Moctezuma's neck. However, when Cortés tried to embrace Moctezuma, Aztec men pulled Cortés away because no one was allowed to touch the emperor.

Still believing Cortés to be the returning god Quetzalcoatl, Moctezuma greeted the Spanish leader by telling him that he had been keeping and guarding Tenochtitlan for him. Then he offered Cortés and some of his men housing in his father's palace. Cortés accepted. All their conversations were translated by Doña Marina, who by then had become Cortés's most trusted ally.

In coming days, Moctezuma personally guided Cortés on a tour of Tenochtitlan. Although impressed with the grandness of the city, Cortés and his men set about immediately to accomplish their goals. They took beautiful gold Aztec ornaments and melted them into bars to send back to Spain. Then they ordered all temples to be washed clean of human blood and all idols of Aztec gods to be destroyed. The Aztecs soon recognized that the Spanish had not come in peace. Before they could act against the Spaniards, Cortés took Moctezuma captive.

Hearing reports that more Spanish troops had landed on the coast, Cortés departed Tenochtitlan to meet them. However, he left behind 120 of his soldiers. While Cortés was away, the remaining troops became concerned that the Aztecs had plans to kill them. During a festival, the Spanish soldiers trapped and killed some of the Aztec dancers. Angered, Tenochtitlan citizens laid siege to the Spanish garrisons, held the soldiers prisoner, and waited to ambush Cortés on his return.

Eventually, Cortés returned, and a battle began. After six days, the Aztecs forced the Spanish and their Indian allies to take shelter in a nearby city controlled

by Aztec enemies. During the vicious battle, both sides suffered many deaths. Moctezuma himself was killed. His brother, Cuitlahuac (Kwee-TLA-wak), became emperor.

After the Spanish fled, the Aztecs did not attempt to track down and kill their enemies because they were confronted with an even more deadly enemy in their own city. That enemy was smallpox, a contagious disease introduced by the Spanish into the Aztec population. Smallpox was a disease unknown to the Aztecs, and they had no immunity to it. The disease swept through the city, killing thousands of people—including the Aztec's emperor Cuitlahuac. After his death, a cousin of Moctezuma, Cuauhtemoc (Kwa-uh-TE-mok), became the next, and last, Aztec emperor.

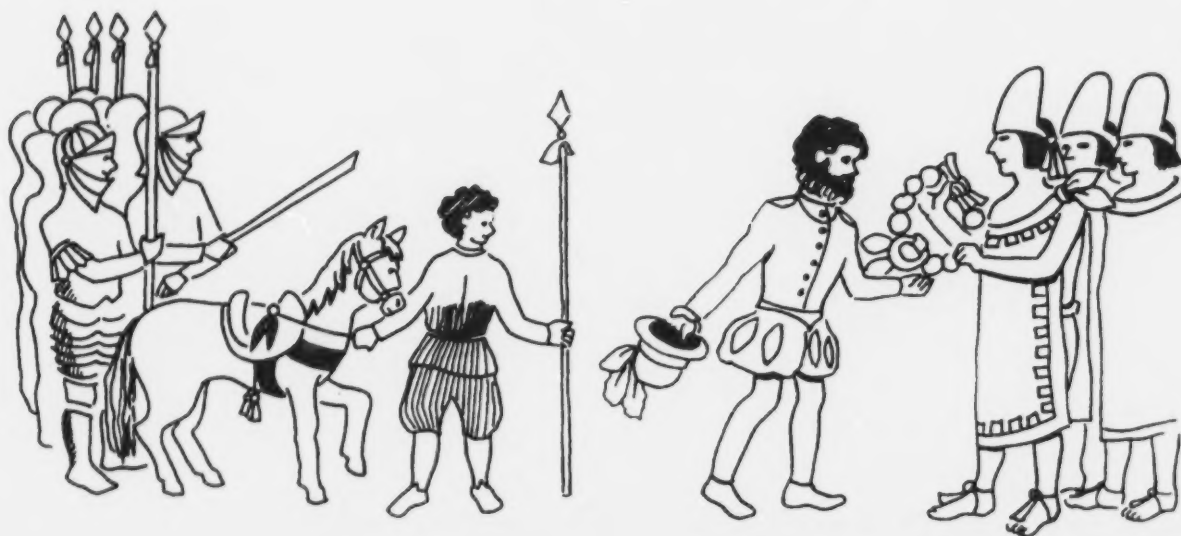
Cuauhtemoc tried to rally the Aztec warriors and rebuild the city's supplies of food, water, and weapons for another battle. On May 31, 1521, Cortés and his troops returned to attack Tenochtitlan. Armed with horses, cannons, and newly-built small ships, the Spanish surrounded the city. Then they cut off food and fresh water supplies.

For 75 days, the Aztecs fought with all the strength they could gather. But the toll of disease and lack of supplies finally caused the brave Aztecs to surrender. Streets were lined with bodies of the dead and wounded. Large areas of Tenochtitlan were burned and destroyed and temples were looted. Cuauhtemoc was hanged. Of the approximately 300,000 Aztec defenders of Tenochtitlan, only about 60,000 survived.

In fewer than ten years after Cortés's arrival, the whole Aztec empire was controlled by the Spanish and renamed New Spain. Spanish guns, horses, Indian allies, and military strategies all played a role in defeating the Aztecs. Yet, no factor was more important than smallpox. For years, new plagues of smallpox and other European diseases continued to wipe out thousands of Aztecs and other native peoples.

As more Spanish and other European settlers arrived in the former lands of the Aztec, many intermarried with surviving descendants. Out of the intermixing of Aztecs and Europeans came a new population of people called mestizos. In the mestizo population today, traditions and memories of the once-proud Aztec empire are still alive.

Interviewing a Participant in the Encounter



The above drawing is adapted from the *Aztec Codex Durán*. It depicts the first encounter between the Aztecs, led by Moctezuma II, and the Spaniards, led by Hernán Cortés. The meeting took place on November 8, 1519, on a causeway leading into Tenochtitlan.

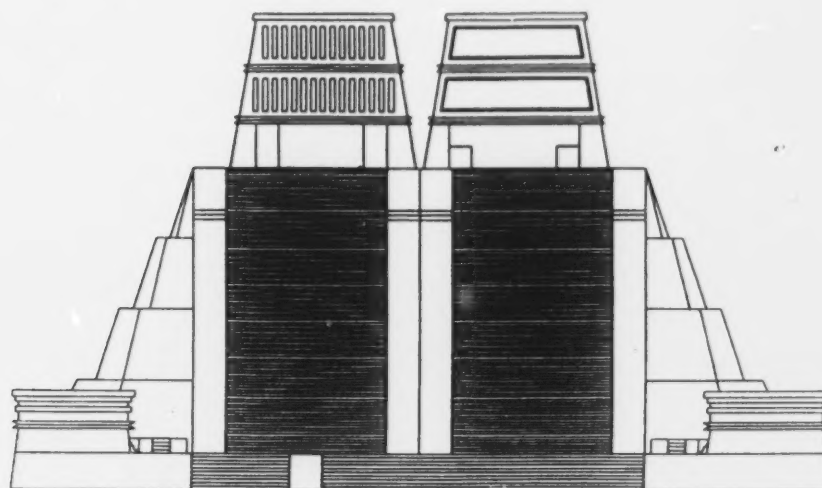
Imagine you are a magazine reporter who has been assigned to interview Moctezuma or Cortés after their first meeting.

First, develop the questions you would like to ask your interviewee. Include questions to find out his impressions of the other people at the meeting, his uncertainties about the other leader, and his plans for the future. Then on another paper, write your interview questions and the answers you think your interviewee would give. Use a magazine interview format, with highlighted questions followed by the interviewee's answers.

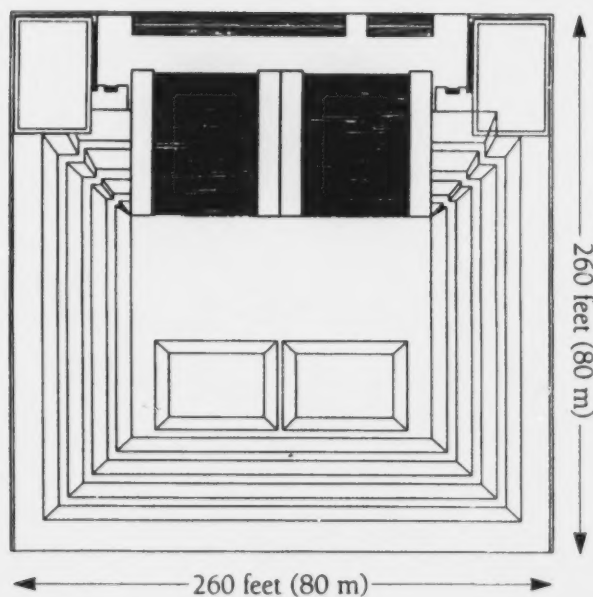
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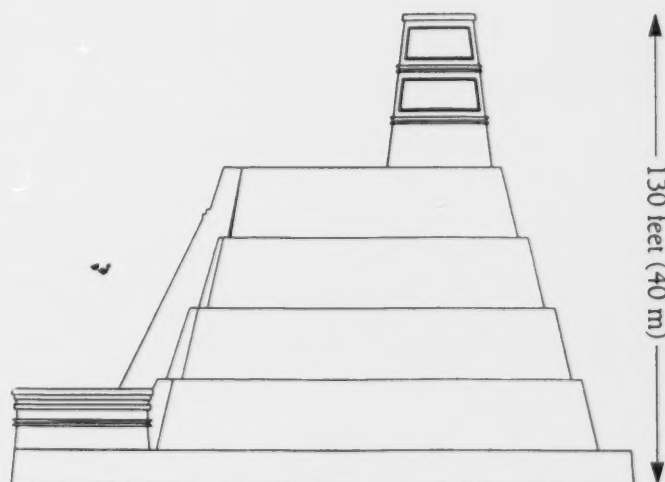
The Templo Mayor



FRONT VIEW



TOP VIEW



SIDE VIEW

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